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# A F R I C A

JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN INSTITUTE

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NUMBER I

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## IDA CAROLINE WARD

WE have, with the deepest regret, to record the death on 10 October 1949 of Professor Ida Ward after a short but severe illness. Most members of the Institute have long been aware of the great services she has rendered to it in the field of linguistic studies. Not only has she made an outstanding academic contribution, of which Professor Diedrich Westermann writes below; she also worked tirelessly for the fuller appreciation in every quarter of the importance of linguistic studies and the development of vernacular literature for research, education, and social development in Africa. Her lively, shrewd, patient and, above all, kindly personality attracted the interest and co-operation of all concerned, either scientifically or practically, with African languages. Scholars, administrators, and teachers of every country warmed to the quiet determination, measured enthusiasm, and great fairmindedness with which she would present or discuss new developments and opportunities. As Chairman of the Institute's Linguistic Advisory Committee and a member, since 1947, of its Executive Council, Professor Ida Ward gave us invaluable service. All who met and worked with her in committees and conferences in Europe and America, and especially in Africa itself, know well that she embodied in a quite exceptional way our aspirations and scientific standards in the linguistic field, and was for us an ambassador of great value. Her trim, frail presence radiated goodness and common sense as well as high originality of mind. Although she had retired a year previously from her University Chair she was contributing as actively as before to the Institute's work. In his address at a memorial service held in London on 15 October, Professor Turner, Director of the School of Oriental and African Studies, with which she had been so long associated, expressed feelings which we in the Institute fully share, recalling Professor Ward as a great and good woman. Her name is already established in the roll of great women who have done much for Africa.

Members will share the deep sense of loss of the Officers and Council of the Institute in realizing that we shall no longer have the pleasure, inspiration, and guidance of her kindly presence among us.

DARYLL FORDE

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*'Africa', the Journal of the International African Institute, is published by the Institute but except where otherwise stated the writers of the articles are alone responsible for the opinion expressed.*



## PROFESSOR IDA WARD—AN APPRECIATION

PROFESSOR IDA C. WARD, until 1948 head of the African Department of the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London, was equally eminent as a teacher and researcher; she had lectured in many European universities and her distinguished gifts were known and appreciated in Europe and America. It is largely through her work and her personality that the African Department of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, has become a world-famous institution in the field of African linguistics. Her name will forever be connected with the study of African languages, and in particular of African tone languages. It was the function of tone in West African languages on which her work centred, and her achievements in this difficult and delicate field have initiated a new phase in our knowledge of African speech. Hers was the unfailing ear, the keen observation of sound-production and the art of reproducing foreign sounds and new sound-sequences, which make the true phonetician. What gave her work such fullness of life and actuality was its intimate linking with practical language study. It may be said that many of her important discoveries were the immediate outcome of her teaching. Teaching, practising, and researching were to her an indissoluble unit. 'The practical depends on the scientific, for one can never tell what practical problems—or solutions of problems—will be thrown up by meticulous scientific analysis', and 'on the other hand, the practical application of scientific research keeps the researcher within bounds, as it were, and will not allow him too far into the *realms of conjecture* and theorising'.<sup>1</sup> She was an ideal and enthusiastic teacher, never tiring, never losing patience. A group consisting of herself, an African assistant, and a small cluster of students was her ideal; here all were partners in the same aim, and all took an active part in the subject discussed.

Ida Ward had started her scientific career as a phonetician and a pupil of Professor Daniel Jones. From the beginning her attention was directed to questions relating to speech melody and similar problems: in 1926 she published, with L. E. Armstrong, a *Handbook of English Intonation* which has had a wide circulation in England and abroad.

In close collaboration with Daniel Jones she was soon drawn towards investigating African languages and their tone behaviour. In 1932 she became a lecturer at the School of Oriental and African Studies and in 1937 was appointed the Head of its African Department. Henceforward the School was the centre of her life and work and her special field was the languages of West Africa, in which intonation plays an essential part. The study of this phenomenon became, besides the general phonetic and grammatical structure of languages, her main task. It was to her advantage that at the School there were always Native assistants or students speaking various West African languages, who afforded ample opportunity for research. She paid several visits to West Africa to collect linguistic material, especially on the Efik, Ibo, Ibibio, and Yoruba languages, and also to advise the Governments of Nigeria and the Gold Coast on linguistic problems, in particular the possibility of finding a suitable written form for the Asante-Akan languages. She was planning a further visit in 1950.

<sup>1</sup> This quotation is from an article by Professor Ward in the *Zeitschrift für Phonetik und allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft* (1949, fasc. 1/2).



In Professor Ward's own definition 'tone languages are those in which the pitch of each syllable of a word or phrase is an essential part of that unit'. The significance of tones had until then been recognized solely or mainly in distinguishing otherwise identical words, little attention having been paid to the working of tone in phrases, where important changes in intonation may occur. Miss Ward has taught us that tone in single words is only a first step, and not even the most essential one, in the mastering of the problem, and that intonation also works in grammatical forms and syntactical structures; she has progressed to the tonal analysis of the whole language. To quote again her own words: 'It is obvious that an accurate tonal analysis is essential if we are to understand all the workings of a language . . . and judgements on the "richness" or "poorness" of expression of a language cannot be valid without a full tonal documentation.' In her book on Ibo<sup>1</sup> she gives a detailed description of what tonal analysis means, viz. '(a) to find out the inherent tone of every word of the vocabulary covered; (b) to classify into tonal classes nouns and verbs and to a lesser extent, adjectives; (c) to examine the "behaviour" of these tone classes: i.e. to find out if there are any changes and what those changes are; (d) to investigate the apparent purpose of the changes, or the conditions under which they take place; and (e) to set out the "tone patterns" requisite for all the main constructions of the language.' This new way of looking at tone languages is not easy to follow, but it is the only one which leads to satisfactory results, and it will have to be applied to all tone languages in Africa; Professor Ward was pursuing the study of tone, particularly as a possible basis of linguistic classification, up to the time of her death.

In 1930 Ida Ward joined the International African Institute; from this time onward she gave an increasing share of her time to its work, and contributed a number of articles to *Africa*.<sup>2</sup> She was soon elected a member of the Institute's Linguistic Group, which met frequently from 1931 onwards, and prepared a revised edition of the *Practical Orthography of African Languages* (Memorandum 1), which she supplemented in 1937 by a simplified version for the use of Africans. In 1936 she was appointed a representative of the School of Oriental and African Studies on the Governing Body of the Institute. In the following year she became a member of the newly constituted Linguistic Advisory Committee, which had frequent meetings until 1939, when, owing to the war, it ceased to function and was superseded by the Interim Language and Literature Committee, which under her Chairmanship directed the work of the Institute during the war until its reorganization in 1944. In that year the Linguistic Advisory Committee was constituted again, with Professor Ward as Chairman, to advise the Executive Council on all linguistic matters. It was

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to the Ibo Language*, Cambridge, 1936; also, *The Phonetic and Tonal Structure of Efik*, Cambridge, 1933.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Arochuku Dialect of Ibo', R. F. G. Adams and Ida C. Ward, vol. ii, no. 1, 1929. 'Quelques observations sur la langue mandingue', Henri Labouret et Ida C. Ward, vol. vi, no. 1, 1933. 'A Linguistic Tour in Southern Nigeria', vol. viii, no. 1, 1935. 'A Note on the Abua Language', vol. viii, no. 3, 1935. 'How to learn an African Language', vol. x, no. 2, 1937. 'A Short Phonetic Study of Wolof

(Jolof)', vol. xii, no. 3, 1939. Together with the writer of these lines she published in 1933 the *Practical Phonetics for Students of African Languages*, in which her contribution was the lion's share (revised edition, 1948). In 1937 she published *Practical Suggestions for learning an African Language in the Field*, Memorandum xiv. She provided an introduction to Dr. Crosby's *Introduction to the study of Mende*, published by the Institute in 1944; her book on Yoruba was in the press at the time of her death.



charged with the organization of work on the Handbook of African Languages which the Institute is preparing with the aid of a Colonial Development and Welfare grant. Professor Ward continued as its Chairman until her death. In view of her manifold activities for the Institute, it was natural that, in 1947, she was elected a member of its Executive Council.

As this bare enumeration of facts shows, Professor Ward's work was equally significant on the practical and on the theoretical side. She has done much for the Institute, and through the Institute for the cultivation of African languages. She loved her work; it gave her a deep satisfaction and was the fulfilment of her life. With her masterly ability in the art of African linguistics she combined a productive mind: when she had seen a problem, she at once set to work at it and soon dealt with it in a literary form which was easily readable, unpretentious, and always reliable. Thoroughness of results and a simple way of presentation went hand in hand.

Professor Ward has had many friends, African and European. Those who have seen the beaming and expectant faces of Africans on entering her room for a discussion of their language, will not forget these meetings, nor will those who had the privilege of working with her and enjoying her friendship.

D. WESTERMANN



# LES SORKAWA PÊCHEURS ITINÉRANTS DU MOYEN NIGER

JEAN ROUCH

CETTE étude des pêcheurs itinérants sorkawa du Moyen-Niger fait partie d'un travail général sur les pêcheurs du Niger. C'est le résultat d'enquêtes menées à deux reprises sur le terrain, en 1946-1947 au cours de la descente du Niger en pirogue de sa source à la mer, et en 1948-1949 au cours de séjours parmi les pêcheurs sorkawa en campagne de pêche au Niger français.

Il est difficile de séparer les Sorkawa du reste de la caste des pêcheurs sorko de la population songhay, desquels ils sont issus et dont ils ont conservé un grand nombre de traditions. Mais en fait, la situation géographique, historique et ethnique des Sorkawa, leurs manières de vivre et de penser en font un groupe très à part.

## I. SITUATION GÉOGRAPHIQUE

Les Sorkawa ont leurs bases sur une partie très limitée du Niger, exactement du village de Ayuna à celui de Bagarua (120 Km. environ) et le long de l'affluent du Niger, le Gulbi-n-Kebbi. Mais par contre la zone soumise directement à leur influence s'étend entre les deux frontières naturelles du 'W' et des rapides de Boussa (550 Km. environ) et leur aire de déplacement le long du fleuve est extrêmement vaste, de Tombouctou au delta (2.500 Km. environ). Le fleuve et ses rives y ont trois aspects fort différents. (Fig. 1.)

(a) *Le 'W'* (80 Km.). Au sud de Say le Niger traverse l'un des derniers contreforts orientaux du massif de l'Atacora, et s'y fraye un chemin étroit et sinueux que le Commandant Toutée puis Hourst, qui furent les premiers à le parcourir et à en dresser la carte, baptisèrent le 'W'.<sup>1</sup> Sur les berges resserrées du fleuve, une végétation très dense forme un rideau de verdure d'où la mouche tsé-tsé a chassé les hommes et l'on n'y rencontre que le seul village de pêcheurs de Karé Kopto. On peut considérer que le 'W', s'il n'est pas un obstacle véritable à la navigation, marque la limite nord du bief de navigation qui s'étend, au sud, jusqu'aux rapides de Boussa.

(b) *Le bief Bosya à Dyébé* (300 Km.). A sa sortie du 'W' le Niger s'étale à nouveau dans les plaines fertiles du Dendi, de 500 m. à 1 Km. de large il coule lentement entre des rives basses et boisées. Il reçoit deux affluents importants, le Mékrou et surtout le Gulbi-n-Kebbi. Tout ce bief, que ne troublent aucun rapide ni aucun passage à fort courant, est d'une navigation très facile.

(c) *Les rapides de Boussa* (180 Km.). De Dyébé au village de Boussa (110 Km.) le Niger se divise en plusieurs bras étroits (souvent moins de 50 m.). Au passage de seuils rocheux, il se forme des petits rapides. Néanmoins la navigation, réservée aux pirogues, n'exige pas de précautions particulières ni de guides expérimentés. Du village de Boussa à Leaba (70 Km.) le Niger franchit des seuils rocheux beaucoup plus importants formant les trois séries de rapides de Boussa où périt Mungo Park.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Voir à ce sujet Jean Rouch, 'Géographie mythique et traditionnelle du W', à paraître aux *Notes Africaines*, IFAN Dakar.

<sup>2</sup> Pour une étude plus complète des rapides de

Boussa et des circonstances de la mort de Mungo Park, voir 'Les rapides de Boussa et la mort de Mungo Park', *Notes Africaines*, No. 43, juillet 1942.



Le rapide de Auru (600 m. de long pour 20 m. de dénivellation) est le plus important et le plus impressionnant de tout le Niger. La navigation ici est particulièrement ardue. Elle est même presque totalement interrompue aux basses eaux, de mai à juin, par l'assèchement du seul bras navigable. A ce moment les piroguiers doivent faire rouler leur pirogue sur des rouleaux. Pendant le reste de l'année les pirogues franchissent en grand nombre les rapides. Nous avons observé le 4 mars 1947, un passage tous les quarts d'heure à Auru.

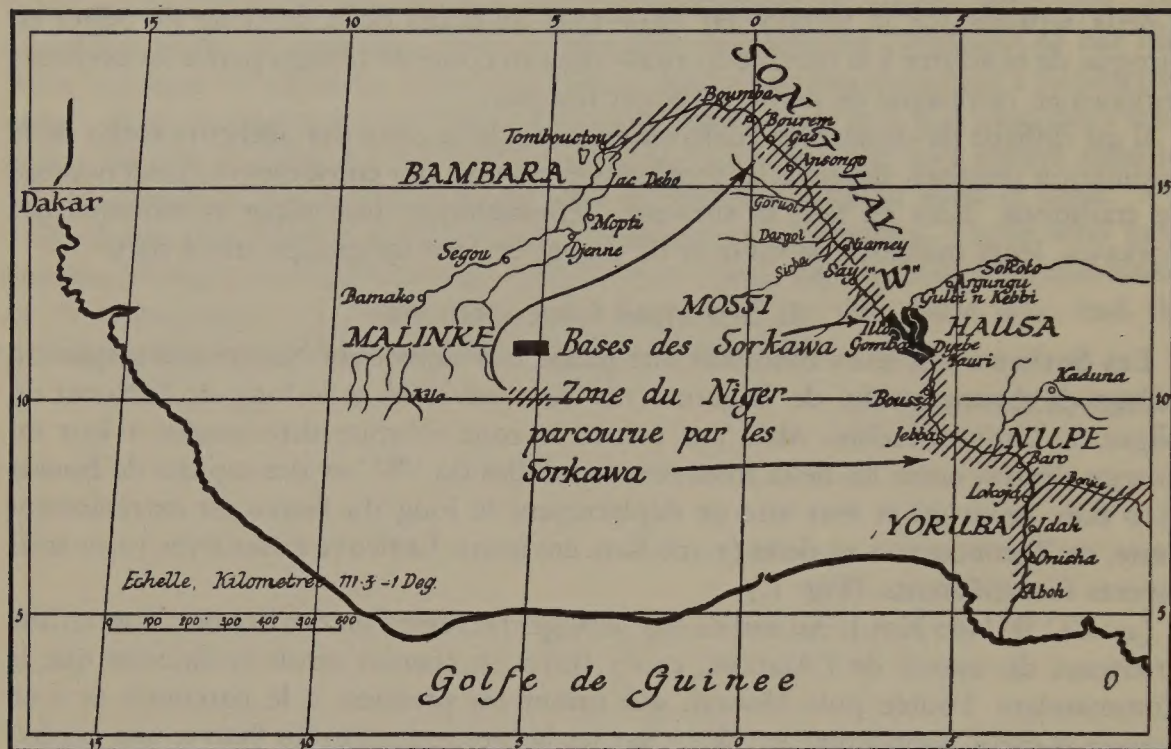


FIG. 1. Extension des pêcheurs sorkawa le long du Niger.

Pour descendre toute cette série de rapides les piroguiers se munissent au marché de Ganté de grandes pagaies de plus de 2 m. de long, à pelle très large, qui permettent de changer très rapidement l'orientation de l'embarcation. (Fig. 2.) Ceci demande d'une part une connaissance parfaite des passes (d'où la nécessité de prendre un guide spécialisé ou de suivre, en convoi, un pilote) et d'autre part beaucoup d'habileté et de sangfroid, car un passage comme celui de Auru qui se fait à plus de trente Km. heure, est très impressionnant. Des accidents se produisent fréquemment (trois naufrages par semaine environ), mais l'équipage se sauve facilement à la nage et va chercher à Auru un vieillard spécialiste des recherches sous-marines. Celui-ci en plongeant parvient quelquefois à retrouver la pirogue, et, si elle n'est pas brisée, il la fait renflouer.

Pour remonter les rapides les piroguiers se groupent à plusieurs embarcations, ils remontent successivement chaque pirogue une à une, de rapide en rapide, en les poussant et en les halant. Sauf en cas d'accident, les habitants de Auru ne prennent aucune part à ces manœuvres.

Le Marine Department de Nigeria a entrepris depuis de longues années des travaux de dérochage. Si ceux-ci ne permettent pas la navigation à d'autres embarca-



tions que les pirogues ou les petits chalands métalliques, ils ont néanmoins rendu les passages beaucoup plus praticables.

*Régime du fleuve.* Le Niger reçoit dans cette zone deux crues : la crue occidentale venant de la Guinée et du Soudan, et qui parvient avec six mois de retard, les eaux restant hautes de janvier à mai ; la crue orientale, résultant des précipitations locales, à effet presque immédiat, débutant en juin, finissant en octobre, ayant son maximum en fin août, et soumise à des variations brutales. De la combinaison de ces deux crues résulte le régime suivant : basses eaux en mai-juin, hautes eaux avec variations très brusques en juillet-octobre, moyennes eaux très régulières en novembre-avril. Les très hautes eaux peuvent atteindre 7 m. au-dessus des basses eaux.

## II. SITUATION HISTORIQUE : TRADITIONS

L'histoire des populations de cette partie du Niger est mal connue. On peut se référer à deux sources différentes, les textes écrits en langue arabe (*Tarrikh-es-Soudan*, *Tarrikh-el-Fettach*, chroniques recueillies par H. R. Palmer dans les *Sudanese Memoirs*) ; et les traditions locales recueillies directement ou publiées dans les travaux de Mrs. Temple,<sup>1</sup> de Meek,<sup>2</sup> de P. G. Harris,<sup>3</sup> de Urvoy,<sup>4</sup> et les documents de l'administration locale.<sup>5</sup>

Deux faits saillants dominent l'histoire de cette région : l'influence du Songhay, dont l'expansion vers le sud se limite à Boussa ; les conflits de religion, 'paganisme' initial contre un Islam d'importation d'abord Malinké puis Songhay (islam fort impur), enfin Peul (la conversion par le glaive). Il faut ajouter à ces deux éléments un troisième pour la période moderne, l'arrivée des Européens, mais nous limiterons ici son étude à l'influence de la pacification européenne sur les pêcheurs.

### *Rôle des pêcheurs — Traditions de Faran Maka Boté et de Tyarakoy*

Tout au cours de l'histoire un élément géographique a joué un rôle considérable : le Niger. Ce fleuve est le lieu de l'histoire du Songhay, c'est en suivant le Niger que les pêcheurs sorko montrent la voie aux futures conquêtes ; c'est souvent par eau, et grâce à la flotille des pirogues des Sorko (conduite par le *hikoy*, premier dignitaire de l'empire) que le Songhay pénètre en territoire ennemi, et c'est aussi par le Niger que l'Askia, vaincu par les Marocains, se réfugie au Dendi.

L'origine des Sorko ne nous est pas connue ; eux-mêmes, ils se donnent pour descendants d'un seul personnage, Faran Maka Boté, qu'ils regardent comme héros. Ses aventures merveilleuses forment le sujet d'un grand nombre de chansons des vieux pêcheurs et des griots du pays Songhay.<sup>6</sup> Si toutes ces chansons diffèrent suivant les informateurs, on y retrouve cependant toujours les mêmes thèmes. Ainsi, suivant la version la plus répandue, Faran Maka Boté aurait l'origine suivante : son père serait le pêcheur Nasili (ou Boté), sa mère, une femme génie Maka (ou Mha,

<sup>1</sup> C. L. Temple, *Notes on the Tribes, Emirates and States of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria*, Cape Town, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> C. K. Meek, *Tribal Studies in Northern Nigeria*, 2 vols., 1931, 1933.

<sup>3</sup> P. G. Harris, 'Notes on Yauri', *J. Roy. Anthropol. Inst.* 1930 ; 'Kebbi Fishermen', *ibid.* 1941.

<sup>4</sup> Y. Urvoy, *Histoire des populations du Soudan Central*, Paris, 1936.

<sup>5</sup> p.e. l'étude des traditions du Cercle de Dosso, par Perrier et Sellier ; doit paraître au *Bulletin de l'IFAN*.

<sup>6</sup> Voir en particulier *Les Chansons de Farang*, recueillies par Dupuis Yacouba, et publiées par Desplagnes. Celles que nous avons pu recueillir seront publiées dans le travail général sur les pêcheurs du Niger.



après les Sorko du Dendi). Nasili, en creusant la terre pour construire sa maison, découvrit Maka dans un 'amas de terre rouge'. Il l'épousa et il en eut un fils Faran. Nasili apprit à Faran le métier de la pêche, Maka lui apprit les secrets de la magie. Ainsi Faran Maka Boté devint à la fois le meilleur pêcheur du Niger (il tuait et mangeait deux hippopotames chaque jour) et un magicien renommé. Il remonta le Niger et s'établit à Gao (dont il est réputé le fondateur). Grâce à ses dons de magicien, il délivra toute une famille de génies, les *tôru*, d'un génie tyran *Zinkibarou*. Ces *tôru* étaient d'importants personnages puisque parmi eux se trouvaient *harakoy dikko*, le génie de l'eau, maître du fleuve, et *dōngo*, le génie du tonnerre. Pour le remercier, les génies *tôru* initièrent Faran Maka Boté qui devint le premier prêtre de la religion des génies, celui qui savait faire venir la pluie, qui commandait aux poissons et aux hippopotames de sortir de l'eau, qui faisait tomber la foudre sur ses ennemis et qui savait aussi soigner les foudroyés. Cette alliance étrange entre *dōngo*, le génie du tonnerre, et Faran Maka Boté eut pour les descendants de ce dernier une conséquence inattendue : les pêcheurs sorko eurent tendance à abandonner la technique de la pêche pour s'adonner presque exclusivement au culte de *dōngo*.

Faran Maka Boté avait reçu d'autre part du génie de l'eau *harakoy dikko* un harpon du nom de *zirbini* (c'était un ancien crocodile très méchant que lui-même, aidé de sa mère Maka, avait chassé du village de Hondey qu'il ravageait). Et de même que Faran Maka Boté est l'ancêtre de tous les vrais Sorko, *zirbini* est l'ancêtre de tous les harpons.<sup>1</sup>

Faran Maka Boté passa ainsi sa vie sur le Niger à pêcher et à diriger le culte des génies. Il apprit à ses enfants le maniement des harpons, il les initia aux différents rites qui permettent d'appeler les puissances invisibles. Il mourut à Bamba Sorko (entre Gao et Tombouctou), et sa tombe est encore un endroit très vénéré par tous les pêcheurs. Ses enfants se dispersèrent tout le long du fleuve et ce sont ses descendants qui sont les Sorko d'aujourd'hui, car pour être un véritable Sorko, il faut avoir pour ancêtre Faran Maka Boté.

Faran Maka eut un fils (ou un petit-fils)<sup>2</sup> qui s'appelait Halilu et qui était surnommé Tyarakoy, c'est-à-dire en langue songhay 'celui qui a une herminette'. Faran Maka Boté, qui vivait alors à Gao, envoya Tyarakoy pêcher au Dendi, après lui avoir donné des harpons dont un était '*zirbini*'. Tyarakoy partit accompagné d'autres pêcheurs de sa famille. Il descendit le Niger, dépassa le Dendi, remonta le Gulbi-n-Kebbi et s'établit à Sabi. Il y fut bien accueilli par les habitants qui ne se livraient à la pêche qu'occasionnellement dans le Gulbi et dans ses diverticules d'hivernage. Les nouveaux arrivés découvrirent dans ce pays des ressources que n'avait pas la région de Gao. Tyarakoy, en particulier, se servit des fibres des racines de palmiers rôniers pour

<sup>1</sup> Il existe actuellement d'autres harpons que *zirbini*, par exemple le harpon *babingay*, qui est femelle, et qui est jalouse de *zirbini*. Si les Sorko lancent *babingay* avant *zirbini*, ce n'est pas que celle-ci soit supérieure à celui-là, mais bien pour éviter des querelles entre leurs deux armes. Tous ces autres harpons sont maintenant considérés comme harpons traditionnels des ancêtres respectifs des différentes branches des Sorko (Harris, op. cit., en cite cinq), mais les traditions sont unanimes à reconnaître que ces ancêtres et leurs harpons descendent de Faran

Maka Boté et de *zirbini*.

<sup>2</sup> D'après Harris (*Notes on Yauri*) qui cite 'la légende rapportée en pays Hausa', Faran Maka Boté avait une sœur Gawokwoy; Faran donna au fils de Gawokwoy, Halilu, surnommé Kyarakoy, le commandement des eaux du Haoussa. Mais, suivant d'autres informations rapportées toujours par Harris, cette Gawokwoy serait la sœur du Sonni Ali, qui effectivement dans les traditions songhay, joue un rôle important (sous le nom de Kassey). Je pense qu'il y a une confusion entre ces deux personnages.



fabriquer de nouveaux engins de pêche. Il inventa ainsi les nasses *gura* et *hundurutu*. On lui prête même l'invention des filets senne et épervier. Et peu à peu ces Sorko émigrés abandonnèrent l'exclusivité de la pratique de la pêche à l'hippopotame, qui était leur essentielle occupation au Songhay, pour devenir des pêcheurs de poissons; leurs techniques se perfectionnèrent et ils devinrent les meilleurs pêcheurs de poissons de la branche orientale du Niger. Quand Halilu mourut à Sabi, son frère Gambu lui succéda en prenant aussi le nom de Tyarakoy. Ainsi 'tyarakoy' qui n'avait servi au début qu'à désigner un homme habile au maniement de l'herminette, devint le titre du chef des pêcheurs sorko du Haoussa.

Il n'est pas possible, en partant simplement de cette tradition, de déterminer la date approximative de l'arrivée des Sorko au Kebbi. Une liste généalogique de Sorko fait remonter Halilu à 13 générations, ce qui fait moins de quatre siècles. D'autre part si l'on rattache Tyarakoy Halilu à Faran Maka Boté, ceci nous rapporte au ix<sup>e</sup> ou x<sup>e</sup> siècle (date donnée par Delafosse de la fondation de Gao par Farang), qui coïnciderait d'ailleurs avec la date donnée par Harris pour la fondation de Yauri par les Sorko. Sans doute ici encore, la migration des Sorko ne s'est pas faite en une seule fois, et seule la tradition de la chefferie est restée au détriment de celle du groupe lui-même. Il faut simplement supposer que Tyarakoy Halilu fut le premier à organiser les pêcheurs sorko du Haoussa, établis depuis longtemps au Kebbi, auquel il apportait des éléments nouveaux et des techniques nouvelles, et que lui, ou ses successeurs, accueillirent dans leur groupe les Songhay qui émigrèrent ultérieurement en descendant le Niger, soit à cause de la conquête marocaine, soit par suite des guerres peules et touareg.<sup>1</sup> Le mélange avec certaines tribus locales ne fit qu'augmenter la complexité, et modifia d'une façon très appréciable les caractères morphologiques de la caste sorko, y apportant des éléments négroïdes (largeur du nez, prognatisme, épaisseur des lèvres . . .) qui permettent de distinguer en règle générale un vrai Sorko d'un Sorko du Haoussa.<sup>2</sup>

Quels furent les rapports des Sorko avec les habitants du Kebbi? Une information mentionne une hostilité: d'après la tradition de Gomba, un Sorko, Sambu, alla s'établir à Argungu. Mais il eut des difficultés avec le Kanta, et il préféra quitter Argungu pour aller à Gomba où il se plaça sous l'autorité du Tyarakoy de Sabi. En dehors de cette tradition les rapports des Sorko avec les chefs kanta paraissent avoir été toujours fort corrects. Et, de fait, si l'on admet avec Palmer que le protocole de l'ancien Songhay ait été repris par le Kanta du Kebbi, il est probable que le Tyarakoy devait occuper un poste équivalent à celui de l'ancien *hikoy*, chef des piroguiers du Songhay. Il faut cependant remarquer que le rôle joué par les Sorko dans l'histoire pourtant guerrière du Kebbi n'a pas laissé de souvenir analogue à celui des exploits des Sorko du Songhay; ceci pourrait s'expliquer par les préoccupations de plus en plus économiques de ces pêcheurs émigrés. Le fait le plus important des contacts

<sup>1</sup> Les traces de ces différentes origines se retrouvent encore aujourd'hui dans les traditions des familles sorkawa. Ainsi Amaru Alu du village de Gomba est Sorko par sa mère et Mamar Hama, c'est-à-dire descendant de l'Askia Mohammed, par son père.

<sup>2</sup> Cette complexité explique à mon sens les contradictions que l'on remarque entre les deux articles de Harris 'Notes on Yauri' (1930) et 'Kebbi Fisher-

men' (1941). Dans le premier Harris suppose que les Sorkawa seraient venus au Kebbi depuis plus de dix siècles, à la suite des campagnes de l'Askia Mohammed; dans le second que 'après que la capitale du Kebbi ait été déplacée de Surame à Birni n Kebbi (début xix<sup>e</sup>), un Magajin Alfa vint du Songhay avec ses suivants qui sont connus aujourd'hui sous le nom de Dan Sorkawa'.



avec les gens du Kebbi, fut une certaine assimilation des pêcheurs par ces derniers. Les métissages furent nombreux, la langue songhay fut abandonnée pour le haoussa, le nom même des pêcheurs se modifia, on ne les appela plus Sorko, mais *Sorkawa*.

Un fait plus curieux est l'abandon des anciennes croyances des Sorko pour l'Islam; les Sorkawa passent aujourd'hui pour de pieux musulmans (Harris les oppose même à ce sujet aux pêcheurs occasionnels du Kebbi restés à demi 'païens'). Cette conversion serait explicable si le nouveau milieu avait été essentiellement musulman, mais il ne le semble pas. Le culte des génies, où les Sorko jouent un si grand rôle, est pratiqué dans toute cette région. Ainsi les insulaires Gungawa ont les croyances et les rites des Songhay; quoique ne parlant pas la langue songhay, ils emploient les noms songhay pour désigner leurs génies: *harakoy*, *zaberi*, *dāndu urfama* . . . Si bien que l'on est amené à supposer que ce sont des Songhay, les ancêtres des Sorkawa, qui ont introduit ces croyances dont ils se sont par la suite presque entièrement détachés. Ce désintéressement peut s'expliquer à nouveau par le renoncement des Sorkawa à tout ce qui n'était pas la pêche. Quant à leur conversion à l'Islam, elle date, à mon avis, des luttes religieuses, au cours desquels les Sorkawa se trouvèrent séparés du noyau résistant Kebbi, et en contact direct avec les farouches prosélytes d'Ousman Dan Fodio. Cependant malgré ces assimilations, les Sorkawa surent rester un petit groupe très indépendant; ils étaient avant tout des pêcheurs, et contrairement à beaucoup de Sorko plus attirés par le culte de *dōngo* que par le maniement du harpon, les Sorkawa sont restés des pêcheurs. Comme le rapporte si justement Harris, les Sorkawa forment encore aujourd'hui 'une corporation très à part des gens de l'eau'. Et cet isolement, assez remarquable, n'est pas indifférent aux progrès de l'organisation et des techniques des Sorkawa.

### *L'influence européenne*

Les pêcheurs sorkawa ne sont pas mentionnés par les premiers voyageurs européens, ainsi le commandant Lenfant qui naviga deux ans sur cette partie du Niger, en contact permanent avec les piroguiers du fleuve, n'en parle pas. Mrs. Temple les mentionne sous le nom général de pêcheurs haoussa. Sans doute les Sorkawa ne s'occupèrent pendant cette période que de pêche. Cependant au début de l'administration anglaise le Tyarakoy était supprimé. D'après les Sorkawa de Koyfa c'est parce qu'il ne donnait rien de l'impôt qu'il percevait, ni au Serki n Kebbi, ni aux Blancs. Le dernier Tyarakoy s'appelait Habon fils de Yaya. Il habitait toujours à Sabi. Je n'ai pu avoir d'autres renseignements sur cette fin de la chefferie des Tyarakoy, simplement Harris signale qu'actuellement le chef des Sorkawa est à Argungu, il porte le titre de 'Magajin Dankanawa'.<sup>1</sup> Il ne m'a pas paru que ce dignitaire d'Argungu ait une grande autorité sur les Sorkawa des autres villages, si ce n'est pour la collection d'impôts.

Cependant les Sorkawa tirèrent un bénéfice considérable de l'arrivée des Européens — la pacification du fleuve. Avant celle-ci en effet les pêcheurs ne sortaient pratiquement jamais de certaines zones de pêche strictement définies: 'chacun pêchait dans son

<sup>1</sup> ' Il y a quatre porteurs de titre au Kebbi qui sont par ordre d'importance *Homa Serki* (émir pêcheur), chef des pêcheurs appointés par le Serki n Kebbi, *Homa Alkali* (juge pêcheur) assistant du Homa Serki

et appointé par l'Alkali Kebbi, le juge mahométan d'Argungu; le *Magajin Dankanawa* déjà décrit, chef des Sorkawa, les pêcheurs au *taru*; et *Dan kwoy* le chef des pêcheurs au harpon.'



petit bout de fleuve'. Lorsque le fleuve fut libre les Sorkawa sortirent de ces zones. Au début les Sorkawa ne firent que déborder chez leurs voisins et parents les Sorko du Dendi, dont le territoire commence à l'amont du village de Yantala (près Gyiris) et se termine au 'W'. Les Sorko Dendi, au contact des Sorkawa, adoptèrent leurs techniques, surtout les nasses *gura* et *hundurutu*, et commencèrent à les suivre le long du fleuve, si bien qu'aujourd'hui Sorkawa et Sorko Dendi ont des modes de vie très voisins. Vers 1920 un groupe de Sorkawa de Gomba allait pêcher en territoire français vers Kulu. L'année suivante ils traversaient le 'W' et allaient s'établir provisoirement aux environs de Niamey. Ils trouvèrent là un bon accueil des Sorko, et comme ces derniers ne pêchaient qu'au harpon, les nasses et les filets des Sorkawa firent des pêches merveilleuses. Puis, chaque année le nombre des Sorkawa migrants et la profondeur de leur pénétration s'accrurent.

La migration vers le sud avait un tout autre caractère. Ici, il ne s'agissait plus de pêcher dans des eaux amis, mais en traversant des populations assez hostiles, d'aller vers le delta du Niger où l'on trouvait les marchandises d'Europe. Cette migration commença, sans doute, avant l'autre dès que les comptoirs du delta eurent suffisamment de renom. A l'exemple des riverains Kamberawa, les Sorkawa apprirent à franchir les rapides de Boussa; ces premiers essais furent assez timides, car le monopole du transport des marchandises en aval des rapides appartenait aux Kyede, la caste des pêcheurs et bateliers du Nupé, puis aux bateliers Kakanda qui fréquentaient les marchés d'Aboh et de Iddah.<sup>1</sup> L'occupation totale anglaise supprima les monopoles et les Sorkawa purent aller échanger directement leur poisson contre les marchandises des commerçants de Jebba et d'Onisha. Certains même découvrirent des eaux poissonneuses dans le bas Niger et s'y établirent temporairement.

Ainsi, à la suite de la pacification européenne, les Sorkawa sortirent de leurs bases, poussant vers l'amont (en 1949 ils sont remontés jusqu'à Diré en amont de Tombouctou, à 1.500 Km. de leurs bases), pour y pêcher, redescendant vers le sud, vers Jebba ou Onisha, pour y vendre le produit de cette pêche. Aujourd'hui, on peut considérer que les Sorkawa circulent, pêchent, vivent sur plus des deux tiers du fleuve Niger.

### III. RÉPARTITION ETHNIQUE

A la suite de ces différents mouvements de population, les groupes ethniques que l'on trouve sur les bords du Niger entre le 'W' et les rapides de Boussa se réduisent à cinq principaux:

1. *Songhay et assimilés*. *Zerma* en amont de Boumba et quelques milliers dans la région de Illo (appelés *Zabermawa* en haoussa). *Dendi* (ou *Dendawa* en haoussa) entre Boumba et Yantala. *Kourtey* et *Wogo* (connus sous le nom général de *Kala kala* en haoussa), émigrés de la région de Tillabéri, répartis entre Illo et Lafagu. Tous ces groupes parlent le songhay entre eux et le haoussa à l'extérieur. Parmi eux, les Dendi sont composés d'une partie importante de pêcheurs sorko.

<sup>1</sup> Il faut remarquer cependant que malgré ces conditions défavorables, certains éléments avaient déjà émigrés dans le sud. Ainsi sur la Bénoué on trouve des groupes songhay et haoussa importants parmi les bateliers du fleuve, signalés par Mrs. Temple

(op. cit.) et P. W. H. Migeod, *Through Nigeria to Lake Chad*. Il est probable d'ailleurs que ces 'pêcheurs haoussa' aient introduit sur la Bénoué et en particulier chez les Jukun, certaines techniques comme les nasses *gura*, qui y portent le même nom.



2. *Kebbawa et assimilés*. D'après Mrs. Temple 316.000 habitent au Kebbi, dont 7.000 pêcheurs. Parmi ces pêcheurs sont comptés les *Sorkawa*, dont le nombre peut être estimé à 5.000 environ. Tous parlent le haoussa, les Sorkawa ne se servant du songhay que pour certains rites.

3. *Bussawa et assimilés*. Les *Bussawa* sont répartis dans la région de Boussa et auprès d'Illo. Les *Borgawa* (*Bariba* ou *Bourgou*), 12.000 habitent le Bourgou, dont 3.000 dans la région de Illo où ils se sont établis aux dépens des *Dendawa*. D'après Temple ils seraient des gens de basse caste des *Boussawa*. *Tyengawa* (ou *Tyenga*), 12.000 environ vers Gaya et Illo, ils seraient d'après Temple une branche des *Bussawa* devenue indépendante. *Shengawa*, fraction des *Tyengawa* ayant émigré sur les îles et les rives du Niger voisines de Shenga (près Yauri). Tous ces groupes parlent une langue spéciale qui aurait un certain rapport avec le songhay (Temple), mais le haoussa, langue franche, fait de très grands progrès.

4. *Yauri et assimilés*. *Gungawa*, vivant dans les îles du Niger entre Dyébé et Boussa. Ce seraient les premiers habitants de la région, des constructeurs de pirogues et des bateliers. Les *Yauri*, d'origine *gungawa* mais islamisés et indépendants, habitent la ville de Bin Yauri et celle de Yelwa sur le Niger.

5. *Kamberawa et assimilés*. *Kamberawa* (*Kamberi* ou *Cambriens* des anciens auteurs), 2.700 sur les rives du Niger de Lafagu à Patachi et dans le hinterland est. Ce sont sans doute des *Katsinawa* d'origine. *Lopawa*, branche des précédents, habitant sur la rive droite du Niger en face de Yelwa. Tous parlent le haoussa.

*Relations des Sorkawa avec ces groupes*. Les Sorkawa se marient seulement avec les Songhay, les Kebbawa et les *Tyengawa*,<sup>1</sup> mais pas avec les *Gungawa*, les *Yauri*, les *Kamberawa*, les *Lopawa*, les *Bussawa* et les *Borgawa*. Les Sorkawa sont localement soumis aux autorités des autres groupes, ainsi ceux de Zaria obéissent au chef qui est un Kebbi, ceux de Gomba obéissent à un chef *Tyenga*. Les pêcheurs sorkawa ne pouvant cultiver, échangent le poisson contre le mil avec ces différents groupes; ils sont tenus d'autre part à verser un certain impôt de poissons aux chefs importants. C'est ainsi qu'un pourcentage du poisson pêché dans le canton de Yauri, et un droit sur le passage devant Yauri en pirogue, seraient encore payés à l'Émir de Yauri (renseignements de Temple et Harris). Ces droits sont les prolongements de la propriété du fleuve par certains villages ou par certaines familles.<sup>2</sup> Le fleuve était ainsi divisé en tronçons strictement bornés, et il est intéressant de remarquer que la propriété de ces tronçons appartenait aux riverains non sorkawa, et que ces derniers devaient payer aux riverains des droits de pêche.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cette position à part des *Tyengawa* à l'intérieur du groupe *bussawa* contredit l'hypothèse de Temple, comme quoi ils seraient une branche des *Bussawa* devenue indépendante.

<sup>2</sup> Cette importante question de la propriété du fleuve, qui intéresse davantage ici les pêcheurs non itinérants — Kebbawa, Kamberawa — sera étudiée dans l'étude générale des pêcheurs du Niger. Signalons ici simplement que sur la partie occidentale du Niger, les pêcheurs somono et bozo ont conservé ces droits de propriété d'une façon beaucoup plus rigide. Nous reparlerons des droits de propriété des Songhay à propos des campagnes de pêche (p. 19).

<sup>3</sup> Il ne m'a pas paru que la question des 'zones interdites' formant de véritables réserves de pêche aient ici la même importance que chez les Bozo et Somono de la branche occidentale du Niger. Alors que dans la région de Mopti existent des 'trous' profonds où il est interdit de pêcher en dehors de certains jours de l'année, cette pratique ne paraît exister que chez les pêcheurs du Kebbi (décrite par Harris dans 'Kebbi Fishermen'), les Sorkawa ne connaissant que certaines zones dangereuses où la pêche ne peut être pratiquée que par les grands pêcheurs qui savent lutter contre les mauvaises forces.



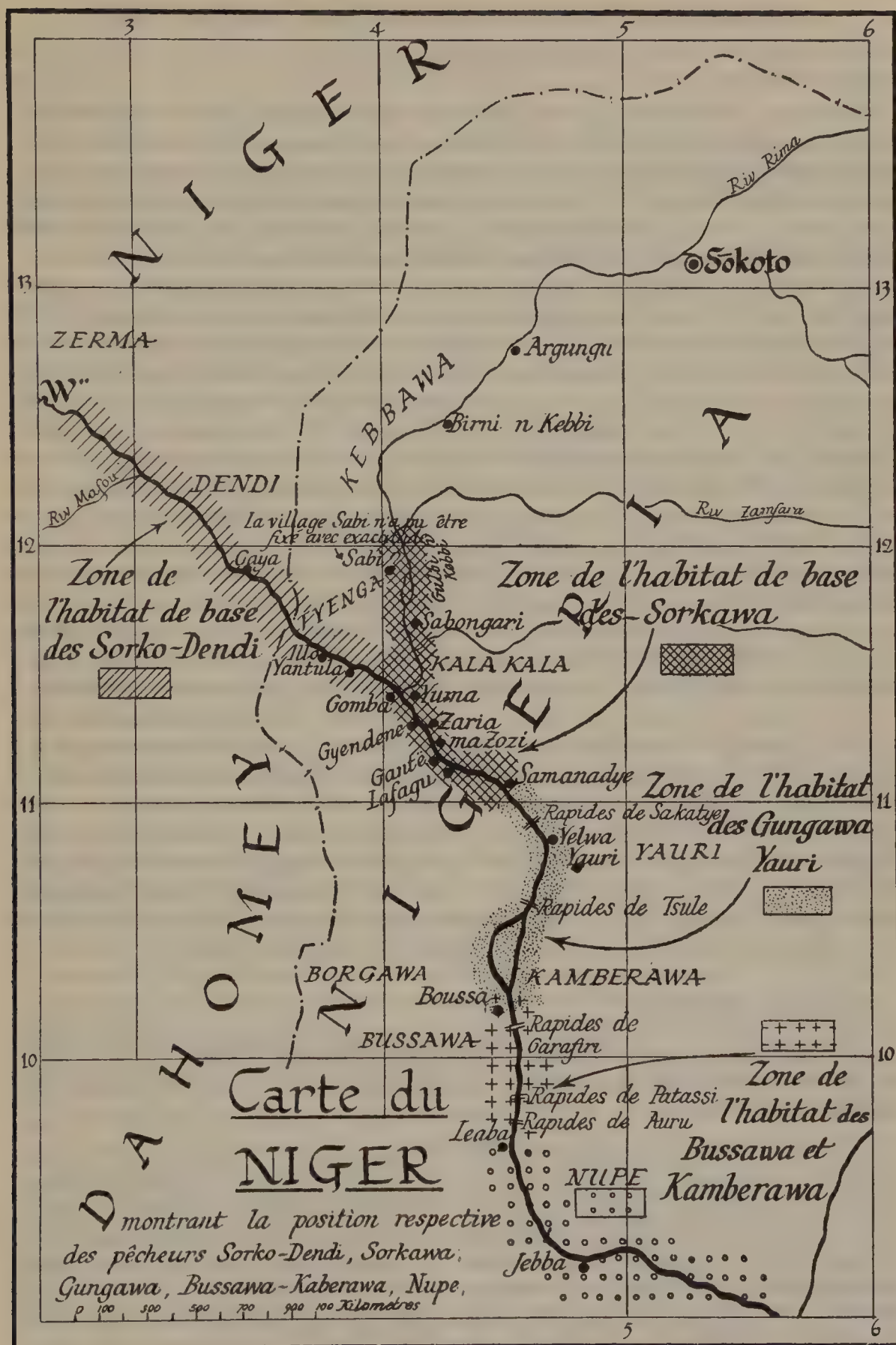


FIG. 3. Répartition ethnique.



## IV. TECHNIQUES DE LA PÊCHE

## 1. LES PIROGUES

Les pêcheurs sorko du Niger se servent de deux types de pirogues suivant leur situation géographique. Depuis le lac Débo jusqu'à Ansongo les Sorko fabriquent eux-mêmes leurs pirogues avec des planches de palmier doum cousues ensemble par des coutures de corde. Le manque de grands arbres les empêche en effet de tailler directement un tronc. Au sud d'Ansongo (et jusqu'aux rapides de Boussa avant l'arrivée des Européens) les pêcheurs et les riverains se servent de la '*kole kole*' pirogue formée par deux troncs évidés et réunis par une couture centrale. Ces pirogues sont faites par une caste de charpentiers spécialisés, les *setye*, qui vont couper les arbres (le *garbey*) sur la Sirba affluent du Niger, et qui profitent des hautes eaux de la Sirba (saison des pluies) pour descendre ces troncs à peine équarris jusqu'au marché de Gothey, sur le Niger, où les pirogues sont achevées et vendues. Les Sorkawa se servaient de la '*kole kole*' jusqu'à ces dernières années. Ils l'achetaient aux insulaires Gungawa, qui continuent d'ailleurs à la fabriquer pour leur propre usage.<sup>1</sup> Mais depuis que les Sorkawa ont atteint le delta du Niger, ils ont complètement abandonné la *kole kole* pour la pirogue du delta qu'ils appellent *habara*. Cette pirogue, que les Sorkawa achètent à Onisha quand ils viennent y vendre leur poisson, est une des plus belles et une des plus rapides de tout le Niger. Si elle est beaucoup moins solide que la *kole kole*, surtout transportée dans un climat beaucoup plus sec que celui de son lieu d'origine (une *habara* dure 3 à 4 ans à Niamey, alors qu'une *kole kole* dure 20 ans et plus), sa rapidité l'a faite très vite adoptée, non seulement par tous les Sorkawa, mais aussi par beaucoup de riverains du Niger qui achètent des *habara* aux Sorkawa.<sup>2</sup>

Les Sorkawa se servent de deux types de *habara*: une grande *habara* de plus de 15 m. de long et de 4 à 7 tonnes de charge (Fig. 4), qui sert au transport des pêcheurs, des leurs femmes et enfants, de leurs engins de pêche et de leur poisson, et sur laquelle ils vivent pendant les croisières; et une petite *habara* de 4 à 5 m. de long, montée par 2 ou 3 pêcheurs et qui sert de pirogue de pêche. Tous ces engins sont propulsés par des pagaies et des perches. Les grandes pirogues sont souvent munies d'un mât à fourche qui permet de hisser une voile rectangulaire lorsque l'allure est vent arrière (voir Fig. 8). La proue de ces grandes pirogues est parfois surmontée d'un fauteuil de bois orné qui sert de siège au pilote chef de bord.

## 2. LES ENGINS DE PÊCHE

Les Sorkawa se servent des engins suivants: foënes et harpons (anciens engins des Sorko), nasses, lignes et hameçons, filets senne, épervier et épuisette (engins spéciaux des Sorkawa).

<sup>1</sup> Je ne ferai que mentionner la pirogue *faringi*, en planches clouées et brochées, que l'on fabriquait au début du siècle à Illo et que décrit Toutée (*Dahomé, Niger, Touareg*): 'Il existe auprès d'Illo, une forêt d'arbres à bois très dur très favorable à la construction des pirogues', et qui aurait été construite par une caste de charpentiers du Nupé, dont il existe un îlot dans la région de Illo. Je n'ai rencontré qu'un seul type de cette pirogue en 1947, au village de Garafiri.

Signalons également que la pirogue monoxyle, dont parlent les Lander n'existe plus, sans doute par disparition d'arbres d'assez grandes dimensions.

<sup>2</sup> Je ne décrirai pas la *habara* ici, tous les voyageurs du bas Niger en ayant suffisamment parlé. On en trouvera une excellente description dans Ling Roth, 'Notes on the Jekris and Igos of the Warri District of the Niger Coast Protectorate', *J. Roy. Anthropol. Inst.* xxviii, 1898-9.



Les foënes et les harpons (communs à tous les Sorko) sont les engins favoris des pêcheurs sorko du nord de la boucle du Niger, mais ils exigent un fleuve très poissonneux ou un gibier de grosse taille puisqu'ils sont lancés à vue.

*hargyi*: foëne à deux ou trois pointes barbelées encastrées dans le bois de la hampe par un crochet de leur extrémité antérieure et amarrées par une ligature; fers forgés par les forgerons et emmanchés par les pêcheurs. Sert à piquer les poissons qui dorment au milieu du 'bourgou' (grandes herbes aquatiques).

*zogu*: harpon à pointe barbelée à emmanchure à douille. Le manche est enfoncé dans un flotteur très léger en forme de fuseau et constitué par la tige sous-marine d'herbes aquatiques (ou par un faisceau de celles-ci). Le fer du harpon est relié au flotteur par une corde tendue sur des taquets. Lorsque le *zogu* touche un animal, le fer se détache du manche, la corde se déroule et le flotteur qui reste en surface indique l'emplacement où l'animal a plongé.

Le *zogu* fut l'arme principale de Faran Maka Boté, et nous avons rapporté le mythe du premier *zogu*, *zirbini* (p. 8). Actuellement tous les Sorko et Sorkawa ont leur *zogu*, dont la forme, les ornements, le nom, le sexe, la devise sont déterminés par des traditions familiales.

*bursu*: lance à lame arrondie fixée à un manche par une douille. Le manche est enfoncé dans un morceau de bois cylindrique qui sert à la fois de flotteur et à augmenter l'inertie de l'arme. Cette lance est destinée à achever les animaux piqués par un harpon *zogu* en leur donnant de larges et profondes blessures.

*gāmbu*: un appeau à crocodile et à silure formé par une pointe frottant sur un racloir fixé à un petit flotteur mobile autour du manche de l'appareil, alors que la pointe est solidaire de ce manche.

Les nasses (spéciales aux Sorkawa) sont les engins types des pêcheurs sorkawa.

*gura*: nasse en forme de poire de plus de 1 mètre de diamètre; fabriquée par les pêcheurs Sorkawa avec des fibres de racine de palmier rônier. (Fig. 5.) Chaque pêcheur a une dizaine de *gura* en travail permanent. Le 1<sup>er</sup> décembre 1948, j'assistais avec le chef des pêcheurs de Gomba en campagne de pêche à Yassane (frontière Soudan et Niger Français), à la visite des nasses *gura*. Sur 15 nasses lui appartenant, 5 contenaient des poissons, 7 étaient vides, 3 déchirées par des poissons qui avaient réussi à s'enfuir. Au total 10 poissons étaient pris, pourtant ce jour était, me dit-on, très moyen.

*hundurutu*: nasse formée de deux compartiments rectangulaires (50 × 75 cm.), fabriquée par les pêcheurs sorkawa avec des fibres de palmier rônier assemblées en mailles, un brin sur un autre fixés par un troisième enroulé sur l'un d'eux. Le premier compartiment s'ouvre par une bouche tronconique en fibres qui permet l'entrée, mais interdit la sortie. L'ensemble permet de prendre beaucoup de poissons dans un seul appareil de dimensions relativement réduites, car le premier compartiment reste toujours vacant, les poissons qui y ont pénétré étant dans le deuxième en essayant de sortir du premier.

La nasse *hundurutu* est placée dans le bourgou en eau peu profonde, par exemple sur les berges voisines du camp. Les nasses sont visitées chaque matin comme les *gura*.

*taru* (senne): un filet rectangle de 3 ou 4 m. de haut et de cent ou de deux cent mètres de long, les mailles ont de dix à quinze centimètres; il est muni de flotteurs formés par des petits paquets de tiges d'herbes aquatiques séchées, et de plombs assez souvent en argile. La corde est faite actuellement avec du fil de pêche européen.



Le filet est fabriqué par les Sorkawa. L'emploi le plus général du filet *taru* consiste à l'étendre à l'aide de deux pirogues qui s'écartent l'une de l'autre en faisant un cercle.

Le filet *taru* coûte cher, et beaucoup de Sorkawa n'ont pas encore assez d'argent pour acheter le fil de pêche nécessaire. De toutes façons, il est rare qu'un seul pêcheur possède un *taru* entier, le filet est formé, en général, par la réunion bout à bout de plusieurs éléments, le poisson ainsi capturé étant partagé suivant la participation de filet de chacun.

*dala* (Sorkawa): filet, un mètre de haut, monté sur les piquets espacés de deux mètres. Il sert à barrer le fleuve rapidement en eau profonde (ou un bras du fleuve).

*byirgyi* (Sorkawa): épervier fabriqué avec du fil de pêche européen et lesté avec du plomb. Il en existe deux types suivant la taille des mailles. Le *byirgyi* est lancé par un pêcheur debout à l'avant d'une pirogue propulsée par un autre pêcheur. On l'utilise en eau peu profonde et relativement calme. Son emploi est très répandu chez les Sorkawa malgré son prix relativement élevé (10 £ de fil par filet).

*kyetaku* (Sorkawa et pêcheurs sédentaires): ce sont des épuisettes doubles de forme triangulaire que le pêcheur tient dans chaque main, les refermant l'une sur l'autre sur un poisson. Elles sont faites avec du fil de pêche européen ou du fil indigène. Les Sorkawa en sont toujours munis pour pêcher à pied en eau peu profonde.

L'épervier et le filet senne n'ont pas encore atteint le degré de développement qu'ils ont chez les Bozo et Somono du Niger occidental. Les Sorkawa n'ont que deux dimensions de mailles, alors que les Bozo et Somono en ont une dizaine correspondant chacune à une espèce de poisson.

*mamari* (Sorkawa): ligne de 100 mètres de long environ portant tous les 20 cm. une petite ligne de 50 cm. de long terminée par un hameçon (500 à 600 hameçons au total). Des flotteurs sont attachés à la ligne tous les mètres. La corde et les hameçons sont de fabrication européenne, mais cette ligne est réputée avoir été jadis fabriquée avec des hameçons et du fil indigènes. La ligne est mouillée en plein courant, en barrage ou en oblique, maintenue par ses deux extrémités à des pierres mouillées au fond du fleuve. Les hameçons ne sont pas amorcés, ils accrochent simplement les poissons qui nagent en surface. La ligne est placée le soir et relevée le matin, en l'enroulant en longues spires sur un bâton qui dépasse de l'avant de la pirogue. Cette ligne est très répandue, chaque pêcheur possède 5 ou 10 *mamari*, et quand elle est employée par des pêcheurs non sorkawa son nom lui a été conservé, ainsi que la tradition de son origine du Kebbi.

Le *yahinga* est un *mamari* qui emploie de plus petits hameçons; un peu moins répandu que le *mamari*, il sert à crocher de plus petits poissons.

*rintšya*: ligne de 20 m. de long environ portant des lignes secondaires tous les 20 cm. Elle ne porte qu'un flotteur à une extrémité. Les hameçons sont appâtés avec des petits poissons pris au *hundurutu* ou au *yahinga*. La ligne est mouillée en plein fleuve, une extrémité fixée au fond par une pierre et l'autre par le flotteur.

*akōnkasa*: une *rintšya* mais que l'on attache aux berges des petits bras du fleuve qu'elle barre entièrement.

*bugu bugu*: ligne à 4 ou 5 hameçons amorcés, attachée à un piquet de la rive.

*fasa*: ligne de jet à 3 ou 4 hameçons.





FIG. 2. Descente du rapide de Auru par une pirogue *habara*

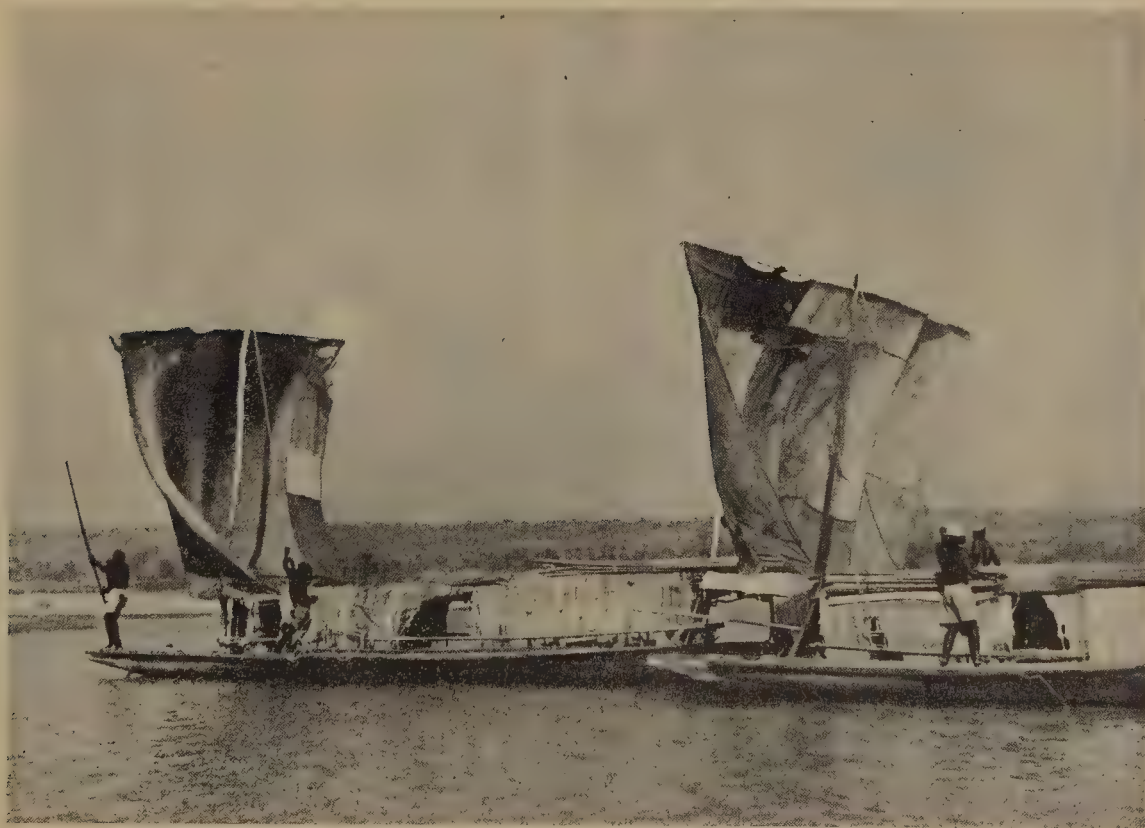


FIG. 8. Remonte du bas Niger à la voile



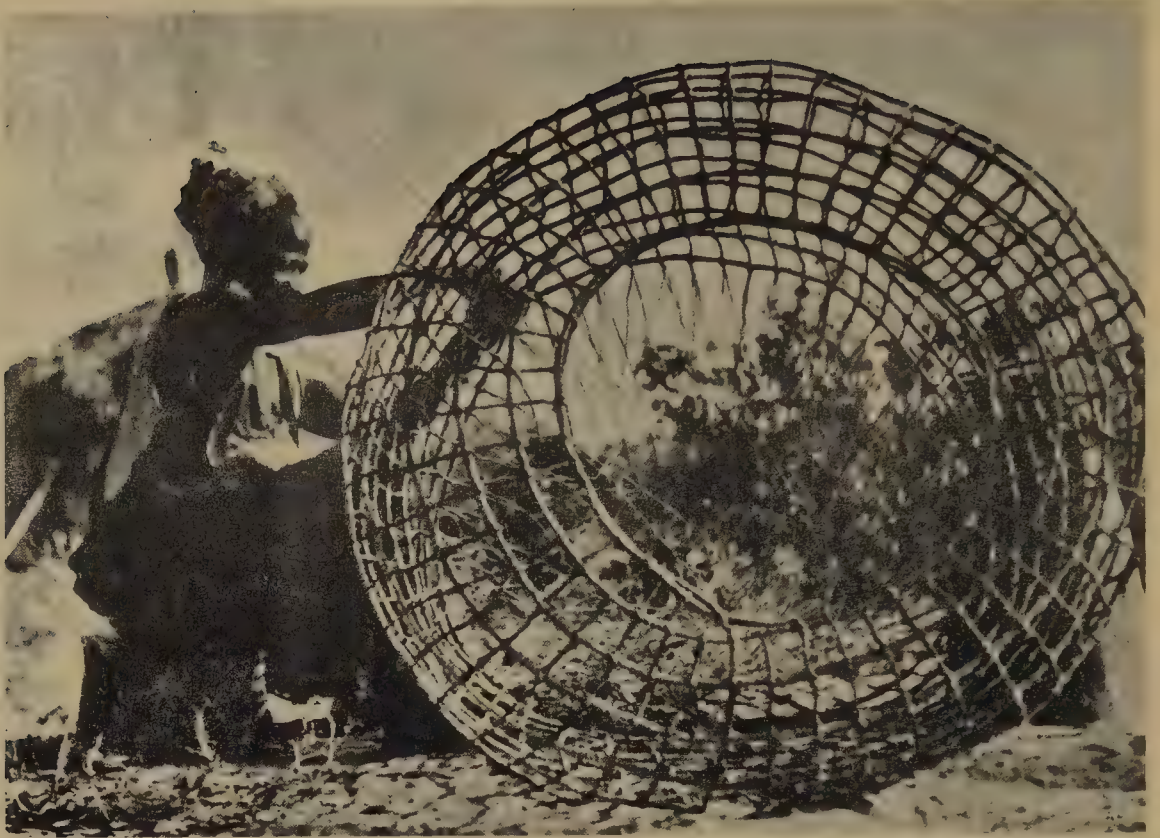


FIG. 5. La nasse *gura*



FIG. 4. Grande *habara* de transport dégarinée de son roof



FIG. 7. Départ du camp de Tassane par les Sorkawa de Zaria



*Emploi des engins suivant les saisons*

Les Sorkawa ont trois saisons correspondant au régime du fleuve.

1. décrues orientale et occidentale: *rani* (basses eaux) 3 mois, avril-juin.
2. crue orientale: *fari rua* (eaux blanches) 5 mois, juillet-novembre.
3. crue occidentale: *bakin rua* (eaux noires) 4 mois, novembre-avril.

Si ces trois saisons sont très marquées au Kebbi, plus les Sorkawa remontent vers l'amont, plus le *fari rua*, la crue orientale, a tendance à décroître par suite de la diminution d'affluents du Niger et des précipitations. Aussi, au nord de Niamey, le *rani*, les basses eaux, durent 6 à 8 mois. Or c'est justement aux plus basses eaux que la pêche est la plus profitable. Le désir d'avoir une saison de pêche plus longue explique les remontées de plus en plus profondes des Sorkawa.

Voici les engins employés suivant la saison:

Basses eaux (avril-juin): filets senne et épervier: lignes *mamari* et *yahinga*.

Eaux blanches (juillet-novembre): nasses *gura* et *hundurutu*: ligne *bugu bugu*.

Eaux noires (novembre-avril): foëne *hargyi* (eau très transparente); nasses *gura* et *hundurutu*; ligne *akônkasa*.

Toutes saisons: le harpon *zogu*; le filet épervier; les lignes amorcées *rintšya* et *fasa*.

Toutes ces pêches, sauf celle au filet senne, sont des pêches pratiquement individuelles, ne demandant qu'une petite pirogue, un pêcheur et son apprenti, alors que les pêcheurs sédentaires se livrent surtout à des pêches collectives.

## PÊCHES SPÉCIALES

*Crocodile*. Il se pêche soit à la ligne (un crocodile happant un poisson déjà croché à un *mamari* s'y croche à son tour), soit surtout au harpon *zogu*. Les Sorko chassent les crocodiles, en plein jour, en s'approchant sans bruit à la nage de ceux qui dorment sur les rochers et en les harponnant à courte distance au *zogu*. Les Sorkawa préfèrent la pêche de nuit, en attirant l'animal par un feu (simple feu de bois, lampe à pétrole, ou plutôt lampe de chasse au carbure) et en l'harponnant au *zogu* dès qu'il est à bonne portée.

*Lamantin*. La pêche à l'*ayu* (mammatus) est en principe défendue, mais beaucoup de Sorkawa ignorant les règlements locaux continuent à la pratiquer. Ils l'attaquent quand il sort sur les berges pour manger de l'herbe. Pour déterminer l'endroit exact où il sort on place le long de la berge supposée des piquets légers; ceux qui sont renversés montrent le chemin que le lamantin a l'habitude de suivre. La nuit le pêcheur s'y poste et le harponne au *zogu*.

*Hippopotame*. La pêche à l'hippopotame a presque complètement disparue et ne se pratique plus qu'en cachette; les Sorkawa reconnaissent d'ailleurs qu'en la matière les Sorko leur sont bien supérieurs.<sup>1</sup> La différence entre les techniques sorko et sorkawa de la chasse à l'hippopotame serait simplement que les Sorkawa ont tendance à pratiquer une fois de plus une pêche individuelle, c'est ainsi qu'en 1946 un pêcheur de Zaria en séjour à Firgoun fut blessé par un hippopotame qu'il attaquait tout seul.

<sup>1</sup> La technique de la pêche à l'hippopotame est décrite dans 'Pêche à l'hippopotame', Jean Rouch, en parution au *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*, Dakar.



## PRÉPARATION DU POISSON

Les femmes sorkawa s'occupent exclusivement de la préparation du poisson. Lorsqu'un pêcheur rentre à sa base, il laisse ses prises dans le fond de sa pirogue, ses femmes viennent les chercher et les préparer.

Il existe deux techniques de conservation du poisson suivant la taille de ceux-ci. Les grands poissons plats sont séchés au soleil; on les ouvre au couteau en quatre quartiers rattachés par la queue, puis on les cuit très rapidement au feu d'une botte de paille, ensuite on les dispose sur des nattes face au soleil. Les autres poissons sont fumés sur des fours spéciaux. Les gros poissons, les tortues et les crocodiles, sont écaillés et coupés en tranches; les petits sont écaillés et retournés sur eux-mêmes et maintenus ainsi par une baguette qui passe dans leurs ouïes et leur queue. Ainsi préparés tous ces poissons sont mis au four. Le four (*kusugu* ou *bânda*), fabriqué par les hommes, est une tour cylindrique d'argile (1 m. de haut, 1 m. de diamètre). A la partie inférieure se trouve une porte qui sert au chargement et à la ventilation du foyer; à la partie supérieure une cloison percée de trous (grille).<sup>1</sup> Un feu doux est allumé dans le foyer, on l'alimente avec du bois, des herbes et des feuilles aromatiques.<sup>2</sup> Les poissons sont rangés sur la grille et le four est recouvert d'une natte. Les femmes surveillent le four, retournant les poissons et vérifiant leur cuisson en les piquant avec des baguettes aiguisées. Les poissons fumés sont mis sur une natte et laissés au soleil pendant une demi-journée, puis ils sont stockés dans des emballages spéciaux.

## CONSERVATION DU POISSON

Pour que le poisson se conserve, il faut qu'il soit aéré. Au camp les Sorkawa stockent le poisson fumé dans de grands emballages spéciaux en natte de deux types; de forme cylindrique, portés par des pilotis et recouverts d'un toit conique en paille pour les stocks faits pendant la saison des pluies (juin-septembre); de forme de demi-cylindres horizontaux supportés par un échafaudage placé au-dessus d'une fosse. La dimension de ces stocks (de 1 mètre cube à 2 mètres cube) dépend de leur position ultérieure dans les grandes pirogues et des dimensions de celles-ci, car souvent les stocks sont simplement transportés tels quels dans les pirogues au moment du départ vers le sud.

## V. LA CAMPAGNE DE PÊCHE ET DE VENTE

—*kwanândazi zam zabarma* (passer la nuit en brousse vers le Zerma).

Dès le mois de mars, avant que les 'eaux noires' ne baissent, les Sorkawa commencent à quitter leurs bases du Kebbi. Ils se groupent à plusieurs familles d'un même village, de 5 à 10 grandes pirogues, sous la conduite d'un chef (en général le plus âgé). Dans les grandes pirogues ils placent plusieurs petites pirogues, les engins de pêche et le matériel nécessaire à leur réparation, des vivres. Dans chaque grande pirogue prend place le chef de famille qui se tient à l'arrière, au poste de pilotage, à l'avant ses grands fils ou ses petits frères pagaient. Les femmes et les petits enfants se tiennent au milieu sous le roof, y préparant la cuisine. Les enfants de plus de dix ans suivent la grande pirogue dans des petites pirogues.

<sup>1</sup> Certains Sorkawa ont un autre type de four; la grille est formée de troncs d'arbres supportés par des murettes d'argile (vu à Kari Kapto en 1948).

<sup>2</sup> Toutée signale le soin que mettent les pêcheurs à choisir le bois et les feuilles 'employées dans ce traitement eupyreumatique'.



La flottille remonte en groupe en suivant les rives, le plus souvent en s'aidant de la perche. Chaque soir les pêcheurs s'arrêtent sur les berges auprès des villages où ils se ravitaillent. Ils remontent ainsi jusqu'à l'endroit fixé pour la campagne. Ce lieu se choisit un peu au hasard, les premiers partis remontant le plus haut possible pour avoir une plus longue saison de basses eaux. Mais depuis quelques années une spécialisation s'est faite, les Sorkawa allant s'installer tous les ans à un endroit qui a fait ses preuves, beaucoup d'engins étant alors laissés sur place et retrouvés l'année suivante, les fours étant reconstruits sur les restes des précédents. Ainsi se constitue une routine de migration saisonnière qui fait que chaque année les gens des mêmes villages du Kebbi reviennent dans les mêmes villages du Zerma ou du Songhay.



FIG. 6. Partie du camp de Tassane, deux concessions.

Les installations des pêcheurs le long du fleuve sont assez rudimentaires; le camp (*tunga*) se compose de paillotes hémisphériques rapidement construites ou même des roofs des pirogues transportés à terre. Autour de ces cases se trouvent les séchoirs à filets et à lignes, les fours (un par famille), les stocks de poisson fumé. (Fig. 6.) Pendant les quatre à huit mois de la campagne les Sorkawa se nourrissent de poisson, et de riz ou de mil échangés aux villageois contre du poisson frais; et surtout en allant vendre une partie du poisson fumé aux marchés hebdomadaires voisins.

Les rapports des Sorkawa et des villageois, paysans ou Sorko, sont toujours très cordiaux. Les Sorkawa ont soin de demander au chef de village l'autorisation de s'installer sur les rives voisines, et de lui donner un assez gros cadeau de poisson qui constitue le droit de pêcher dans les eaux qui lui appartiennent. Les Sorkawa, quoique ne parlant pas la même langue, sont considérés comme faisant partie du groupe songhay qui ne les traite jamais comme des étrangers plus ou moins indésirables.



Les récentes habitudes prises de fréquenter chaque année les mêmes lieux accroissent encore ces liens, si bien que peu à peu les gens du Songhay considèrent les Sorkawa comme une sorte de caste particulière faisant partie de leur société.

*kwanāndazi zazo anike* (coucher en brousse vers Onisha)

De septembre à décembre quand les 'eaux noires' montent, les Sorkawa repartent vers le sud. Avant de repartir ils vendent aux sédentaires les pirogues dont ils n'ont pas besoin, rangent leur matériel, réparent les grandes pirogues qui sont restées immergées pendant tout le camp, chargent le poisson en recouvrant les stocks de nattes (charges de 1 à 2 tonnes par pirogue). Ils descendent le fleuve à la pagaie, s'arrêtant tous les soirs dans les villages pour y échanger du poisson contre du mil ou du riz. (Fig. 7.)

A Gaya, ils s'arrêtent pour payer les frais de douane (10 fr. CFA par kilo en 1948), puis ils continuent vers le sud. En passant devant leur village ils s'arrêtent une dizaine de jours pour prendre contact avec leurs parents qui y sont restés et pour se délester des bagages inutiles. Ils prennent quelques piroguiers supplémentaires avant de repartir vers les marchés du sud. Les pirogues se regroupent à nouveau, souvent avec des Sorkawa d'autres villages et, sous la conduite des plus expérimentés, la flottille de 10 à 20 pirogues affrontent les rapides de Boussa.

Les deux marchés de vente de poisson sont Jebba (à 5 jours du Kebbi) et Onisha (à 20 jours du Kebbi), mais évidemment c'est à Onisha que le poisson se vend le plus cher. Aussi ce sont seulement les pêcheurs qui sont en retard ou ceux qui n'ont pas pu trouver assez de piroguiers qui s'arrêtent à Jebba. En aval de Jebba les pirogues restent très groupées et en quittant le pays Nupé (en aval de Baro) les pêcheurs ne s'arrêtent plus dans aucun village, par crainte des riverains (surtout des chrétiens) qui ont la mauvaise réputation d'assassiner les pêcheurs pour s'emparer de leur pêche. A Onisha les pêcheurs s'arrêtent dans l'île qui se trouve en face du marché et ils envoient les femmes vendre le poisson. Avec l'argent ainsi recueilli les pêcheurs achètent du matériel pour les engins de pêche et des pirogues *habara* (soit directement au marché de pirogue d'Onisha, soit en descendant dans le delta, chez les constructeurs de pirogues de Aboh et Hipida). S'il leur reste de l'argent ils achètent des vêtements et aussi des chaises-longues indigènes dont ils sont très amateurs. Alors ils remontent vers leur village en s'aidant de la voile. (Fig. 8.)

Ils restent dans leur village un mois à peine, pour préparer de nouveaux engins de pêche, puis ils repartent en campagne.

#### *Campagne de pêche au sud de Boussa*

Certains pêcheurs au retour d'une campagne de vente de poisson à Onisha restent pêcher dans le bas Niger. Le poisson y est moins abondant qu'au nord, le nombre des pêcheurs est plus grand, mais 'on trouve beaucoup de marchandises'. Les campagnes du sud sur le Niger même ou sur la Bénoué, sont beaucoup plus longues que celles du nord. Alors que je n'ai jamais entendu parler d'un seul pêcheur du Kebbi restant au Songhay plus de huit mois, les pêcheurs sorkawa que j'ai rencontrés au bas Niger avaient quitté leurs bases depuis plusieurs années. Ainsi à Ineme (près Idah) étaient installés depuis 5 ans des Sorkawa de la région de Illo, et entre la Bénoué et Onisha nous avons fait route en mars 1947 avec une pirogue de Sorkawa



de Dolle qui pêchaient depuis quatre ans sur la Bénoué et qui allaient vendre leur poisson avant de remonter au Kebbi.

### *Budget d'un pêcheur*

A l'aide des différentes informations on peut déduire le budget d'un pêcheur chef de pirogue. Une telle pirogue conduite par trois adultes a un chargement de poisson qui se vend de 140 à 160£, ce qui fait environ une part de 60£ pour le chef et de 50£ par pêcheur. Ce bénéfice annuel peut être considéré comme un bénéfice net, car les taxes de douane, les cadeaux aux riverains, la vie matérielle des pêcheurs et de leur famille sont payés au fur et à mesure de la campagne par l'échange ou la vente locale de poisson. Avec cet argent le pêcheur achète son matériel, engins et pirogues, ce qui entame de moitié son capital. Sans compter les bénéfices de revente des pirogues aux riverains d'amont, on peut estimer qu'un pêcheur chef de pirogue a au moins 30£ par an pour assurer ses autres dépenses. C'est dire que le métier est fort lucratif. Mais il ne faut pas oublier que le pêcheur contrairement aux paysans de son pays travaille presque toute l'année.

## VI. RITES ET MAGIE DE LA PÊCHE

Les pêcheurs sorkawa, à la différence des pêcheurs sorko du Songhay et du Dendi, sont de très zélés musulmans; ils ont abandonné tout le rôle rituel des Sorko pour s'adonner exclusivement à la pêche. Mais malgré cette spécialisation technique, il reste chez eux un certain nombre de croyances anciennes que l'Islam n'a pas réussi à effacer complètement.

*Le génie de l'eau.* La croyance au génie de l'eau existe pratiquement semblable tout le long du Niger depuis le lac Débo jusqu'à Boussa. Un génie commande la vie du fleuve, ordonne ses courants et ses crues, dirige les poissons, les crocodiles, les hippopotames. C'est une femme au teint clair à la longue chevelure, du nom de *dikko*, et qui porte le titre de *harakoy* 'chef de l'eau'. D'autres génies, et en particulier ses parents de la famille des *tôru*, *dandu urfama*, *zaberi*, l'aident dans cette tâche difficile. Nous avons déjà dit comment cette famille s'était alliée avec Faran Maka Boté, l'ancêtre des pêcheurs sorko.<sup>1</sup> Au sud de Gaya, ces croyances demeurent très vives; les génies sont les mêmes, et quoique dans ce pays le songhay ne soit pas parlé, les noms songhay ont été conservés; c'est ainsi que les riverains préfèrent employer le nom songhay de *harakoy* plutôt que celui haoussa de *serkin rua*. Mais il est curieux de constater que la forme du culte de ces génies se rapproche davantage de celle du pays Songhay du nord, entre Gao et Tombouctou, que de celle du voisin pays Zerma. Ainsi, on voit ici comme là un culte spécial au génie *hawa*; le vieux *dandu* y est réputé aveugle et facétieux, responsable des petits accidents du fleuve (alors qu'au Songhay du sud et au Zerma, c'est *farā baru koda*, le fils cadet de *harakoy*, qui tient ce rôle). Les croyances se sont surtout répandues parmi les riverains Gungawa, qui en sont les plus fervents pratiquants. Ce sont eux en particulier qui élèvent au bord du fleuve des autels à *harakoy*, formés par une pierre de section rectangulaire fichée verticalement en terre. C'est sur ces pierres que l'on fait les sacrifices de poulets blancs, de lait ou de bouilli de mil.

<sup>1</sup> Voir 'Culte des génies chez les Sonray', *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, tome xv, 1945.



En dehors de ces sacrifices, le culte consiste en danses de possession, où les génies s'incarnent sur les danseurs après une crise, ce qui permet aux prêtres d'interroger directement les divinités. Ce système n'a d'ailleurs rien de spécifiquement songhay; c'est une forme particulière du culte des Bori des Haoussa, mais avec l'introduction des divinités songhay.<sup>1</sup> C'est ainsi par exemple qu'avant une chasse à l'hippopotame les Sorko demandent au génie de l'eau la permission de tuer un de ses animaux, et surtout de désigner parmi eux le 'responsable de la chasse'; pour parler avec *harakoy* ils organisent une danse de possession à laquelle participent un ou plusieurs médium reconnus de ce génie.

Depuis que les Sorkawa ont abandonné la chasse à l'hippopotame, ils n'organisent presque jamais de cérémonies analogues. Leurs voisins immédiats, les Sorko Dendi, organisent parfois une danse de possession avant le départ en campagne et une autre au retour de la campagne pour demander à *harakoy* de les protéger et de leur donner beaucoup de poissons, puis pour la remercier, si besoin est. Les Sorkawa se contentent, d'après Harris, du *sedaka shekara*, grand repas en commun chez le chef des pêcheurs. Au Kebbi et au Yauri, les Gungawa se livrent à des cérémonies plus importantes. C'est ainsi que les Gungawa de Kyepamini se livrent chaque année à une fête spéciale qui a pour but d'attirer les bonnes grâces des génies du fleuve sur leur village, et en particulier celles de l'ancêtre des *tôru*, *dandu urfama*. Lorsque les danseurs sont possédés, ils s'embarquent dans des pirogues en compagnie des assistants et des musiciens. Tout ce monde se rend au milieu du fleuve et à ce moment *dandu urfama* (son médium en l'occurrence) tombe à l'eau. Tous les hommes sautent derrière lui dans l'eau, et suivant *dandu*, nagent vers la rive où les danses continuent.

*Le génie du tonnerre, le pêcheur prêtre.* J'ai dit comment Faran Maka Boté, l'ancêtre des pêcheurs, fut initié par *dôngo*, le génie du tonnerre, à son culte, et que depuis les Sorko jouent un rôle capital dans le culte de ce génie. Au Songhay c'est le Sorko qui soigne les foudroyés, c'est lui surtout qui demande la pluie au début de l'hivernage (le plus de pluie mais le moins de tonnerre) au cours d'une fête spéciale dite *yenendi*. Les Sorko Dendi ont conservé ces habitudes intactes, et s'ils n'en font pas leur principale occupation, comme les Sorko du Songhay, ils ne négligent pas de jouer ce rôle primordial des pêcheurs, être les intermédiaires entre les génies et les hommes; ils président chaque année au *yenendi*, et dans chacun des villages ils entretiennent avec soin le *hampi* ou *daga*, le grand vase rituel contenant les 'pierres de tonnerre' (haches néolithiques) et l'eau rougie par l'écorce de l'arbre *kabe*. Ce vase est posé sur une fourche de bois et on y accroche les haches rituelles de *dôngo*. Au Kebbi ce sont les insulaires Gungawa qui ont la charge de ce culte, et à côté des pierres de *harakoy* ils élèvent un ou deux '*daga*' à *dôngo* (appelé *aradu* ou *mutun me bisa* au Kebbi). Ces *daga*, plus élevés qu'au Songhay, se voient au bord du Niger jusqu'à Boussa, la limite sud de l'influence songhay.

Par contre les pêcheurs sorkawa ont complètement abandonné le culte du génie du tonnerre, et ils ne jouent absolument plus, au milieu des Kebbawa, le rôle de pêcheurs-prêtres. L'introduction de l'Islam, leur existence itinérante et surtout leurs essentielles préoccupations de pêche, sont sans doute les causes de cet abandon, qui est l'une des principales différences entre les Sorko et les Sorkawa.

<sup>1</sup> D'après les indigènes tous les génies, *holey* des Songhay, *gina* des Bambara, *bori* des Haoussa, . . . seraient les mêmes, seul diffèreraient la manière et la langue employée pour communiquer avec eux.

*Magie de la pêche*

Cependant, malgré l'Islam, les Sorkawa ont conservé remarquablement intactes les pratiques plus personnelles et plus secrètes qui constituent une véritable magie de la pêche. Ici le pêcheur se souvient que son ancêtre Faran Maka Boté délivra un jour les génies *tôru* et en particulier le génie de l'eau *harakoy dikko*, et que grâce à cette parentée il a le pouvoir de parler à ces divinités en maître. Ce n'est plus le prêtre de la danse de possession qui implore les divinités, mais le magicien qui leur commande. Là il n'y a plus besoin d'intermédiaire, le pêcheur tout seul donne ses ordres à l'invisible, le contraint par un *korte*, un charme.

Le *korte* consiste en général en une préparation basée sur l'écorce de certains arbres réduite en poudre et en une ' formule '. Et bien que les Sorkawa ne parlent plus la langue songhay, c'est en songhay qu'ils continuent à réciter la formule du *korte*.<sup>1</sup>

Il existe un grand nombre de ces *korte*, parmi lesquels je citerai : *isa hau* ' attacher le fleuve ', c'est-à-dire rendre inoffensives les mauvaises influences et les mauvais êtres de l'eau, crocodiles, *karey ki*, mangeurs d'hommes, hippopotames qui s'attaquent aux pirogues, génies malfaisants des eaux . . . Par exemple, avant de rentrer dans une partie du fleuve où se trouvent des *karey ki* le pêcheur récite sur une pierre le texte suivant :

Je m'adresse à Andabi  
Andabi n'a qu'à prévenir son patron les grosses dents  
Mon mors de cuivre je le mets dans sa bouche  
Et il est juste à sa mesure.

Puis il jette la pierre dans l'eau.

Les nasses *gura*, les lignes *mamari* et *fatako*, les harpons *zogu*, les filets, ont chacun leur *korte*; par exemple, pour un filet épervier on cueille le jeudi l'écorce du *dugu* et du *gāndakoy*, on jette les poudres de ces écorces sur du feu et on place le filet dans cette fumée en récitant une formule. Mais c'est surtout pour les harpons *zogu* qu'intervient la magie. Leur origine (descendant du harpon primordial *zirbini*) leur confère un grand nombre de pouvoirs (protection de la pirogue où ils se trouvent, impossibilité de manquer le but, blessures ne guérissant pas) qui imposent à leur propriétaire une série de devoirs :

(i) Le harpon forgé est orné d'une marque spéciale qui est celle du propriétaire. Le flotteur reçoit deux ou trois ligatures en cordelettes et 4 ou 3 taquets suivant que le harpon est ou femelle mâle.

(ii) Sur le fer neuf le pêcheur sacrifie un poulet noir, un rouge, un blanc, un de toutes les couleurs (couleurs rituelles des génies *tôru*). Il lui donne son nom en disant (par exemple) :

*zirbini* doit être comme *zirbini* de Faran Maka Boté  
s'il donne un coup il faut que l'hippopotame meurt  
Au nom de Dieu, au nom de Andabi, au nom de Harakoy.

<sup>1</sup> Il est très intéressant de remarquer ici, que les textes de *korte* que j'ai pu recueillir auprès des Sorkawa étaient en langue songhay, dans le dialecte spécial de la région de Gao, et non pas en dialecte *zerma* ou *dendi* parlé par les Sorko les plus voisins.

Cela tendrait à prouver l'authenticité du mythe qui fait venir Tyarakoy, ancêtre des Sorkawa, de Gao. Harris (' Notes on Yauri ') cite un très beau texte de *korte* en insistant, lui aussi, sur le fait que ce texte est dit par des gens qui n'en comprennent pas le sens.



Puis le harpon est présenté au fleuve, le pêcheur debout sur sa petite pirogue de pêche, accompagné des pêcheurs de sa famille, prévient *harakoy* de l'arrivée de ce nouveau harpon.

(iii) Chaque harpon a un sexe, en principe c'est une arme mâle, mais s'il est femelle, il est beaucoup plus dangereux; c'est alors une femelle qui agit comme un mâle, et dont on ne se méfie pas. Mais il est nécessaire lorsque l'on possède plusieurs harpons de jeter d'abord les femelles pour éviter qu'elles ne soient jalouses. (Voir la note page 8.)

(iv) Chaque harpon a une devise que le pêcheur crie quand il le jette pour lui ordonner d'aller au but, puis ensuite pour l'encourager. Ainsi le harpon *zirbini* est flatté par la simple formule: ' *zirbini sangay moyo kursi bani*', qui sont les noms de Zirbini quand il était encore un crocodile du fleuve (voir page 8). Le harpon *hari kām̄ba*, qui est femelle, est flatté par la devise :

*hari kām̄ba* une femme parmi les hommes  
une femme qui a un pénis et qui a forniqué un homme.

Une fois que le harpon a touché, le pêcheur flatte le flotteur. Ainsi le flotteur de *babingay* est encouragé par la formule :

*babingay* il n'y en a pas deux aussi jolis  
les mouvements de l'animal  
Attention attention ne va pas au bord  
ne va pas devant ne va pas derrière  
tire doucement doucement.

Toutes ces connaissances ont donné aux Sorkawa la réputation d'être des magiciens de l'eau.

Ainsi les pêcheurs sorkawa, issus des Sorko du Songhay et assimilés en partie par les gens du Kebbi, forment un groupe très à part de pêcheurs ne vivant que pour la pêche. C'est ce particularisme qui sépare les Sorkawa à la fois des Sorko et des gens du Kebbi, qui leur a permis de perfectionner continuellement leurs techniques et d'étendre davantage leurs rayons d'action. La coupure avec les Sorko et la religion de ceux-ci leur a fait abandonner tout ce qui n'était pas le fleuve et la prise du poisson. Leur indépendance vis-à-vis des gens du Kebbi et la conquête européenne leur a fait quitter leurs bases pour sillonner le Niger sur plus de 2.500 Km. Ils sont devenus aujourd'hui les meilleurs pêcheurs du Niger oriental. Chaque année leurs campagnes sont plus fructueuses ainsi que le montrent les statistiques des douanes de Gaya : en 1945, 115 tonnes de poissons passaient la frontière; en 1946, 258 tonnes; en 1947, 300 tonnes; en 1948, plus de 450 tonnes.

Mais les Sorkawa, ces 'gens de l'eau', jouent un rôle encore plus important. Vivant continuellement sur les eaux, circulant sur le fleuve de village en village, s'adaptant remarquablement à des conditions de vie très différentes, et surtout possédant une remarquable gentillesse de caractère, ils ont su avoir des contacts fructueux d'amitié avec les populations qu'ils fréquentent, apportant ainsi aux cultures africaines des possibilités d'échange les unes avec les autres. Nous avons vu que grâce à eux la pirogue *habara* du delta du Niger est parvenue jusqu'à Gao et Tom-

bouctou. Il est probable que certaines autres manières de faire ou de penser soient aussi modifiées par ces itinérants du grand fleuve africain.<sup>1</sup>

### *Résumé*

#### THE MIGRANT SORKAWA FISHERMEN OF THE MIDDLE NIGER

THIS article, based on two field tours undertaken by the author, describes a particular caste of fishermen, the Sorkawa, who though originally derived from the Sorko of Songhay, now form a group of a special character whose habits of life and thought have been strongly influenced by their specialization as fishermen. Unlike the neighbouring peoples, they are adherents of Islam, although they still preserve in the rituals connected with their craft, as well as in the special terms used in these rituals, vestiges of the beliefs and practices attributed to Faran Maka Boté, the traditional ancestor of all Sorko fishermen. The article gives an account of the exploits of Faran Maka Boté, describes the fishing-boats used by the Sorkawa, their methods of navigating the rapids of the Niger, the various types of tackle used (harpoons, nets, baskets), and the seasonal fishing expeditions, lasting several months or more. A section is devoted to the rituals associated with these expeditions and the magical powers attributed to certain of the implements used. In conclusion the author refers to the effect on the Sorkawa of their extensive travels and their contacts with other riverain peoples along the Niger, with whom their relations are extremely friendly.

<sup>1</sup> Signalons par exemple qu'au contact des Sorkawa, les pêcheurs du bas Niger ont adoptés non seulement certains de leurs engins, mais encore leurs

habitudes de la campagne de pêche. En 1948, des pêcheurs de la région d'Onisha étaient remontés pêcher à Say.



## AN OUTLINE OF THE DESCENT SYSTEM OF THE TEITA, A NORTH-EASTERN BANTU TRIBE

*A. H. J. PRINS*

THIS paper presents a preliminary account of the results of field research among the Teita, a tribal group not previously studied. It aims at giving a survey of the main structural features of the Teita tribal system and of the genealogical groupings within it. I hope to devote a separate article to a study of residential relations as cohesive factors within the tribal structure.

The Teita number well over 50,000. They inhabit the isolated mountains of Dabida and Mbololo, which form the main cluster known as the Teita Hills, the Sagalla ridge south of Voi, the district headquarters of the Teita District on the Mombasa-Nairobi Railway, and the smaller mountains of Maungu, Kasigao, and Maktau. All these mountains rise abruptly from the uninhabited plains of southern Kenya to a height of five to seven thousand feet. These surrounding plains were formerly raided by Galla and are now visited occasionally by some Masai, who were really the only permanent neighbours of the Teita in earlier days.

The Teita may be described as a group of mountain cultivators, some of whom are expert at the production of both subsistence and cash crops grown on irrigated fields. They keep cattle, goats, and sheep, the first for social and the last for ritual purposes mainly. Money is well known among them and seems to be generally accepted as a standard of value. Ethnologically, they might be linked with the Nyika group and with the Kamba. On occasions they refer to the Giriyama and to the Kamba as 'brothers'; but they certainly are not a recent offshoot of these, as has often been supposed. Population density in the 340 square miles of the Teita Hills is approximately 150, and the population is much too heavy for the natural resources, even allowing for the migration of labour from the Reserve.

I pitched camp at Ngerenyi, almost in the centre of the Teita mountains and did most of my work there and in Wusi, some 10 miles to the south and 2,000 feet lower, notably in the 'villages' of Mtango and Mtango Majengo. I did not visit Kasigao, Sagalla, or Mbololo, though I got a good deal of information from my boy who came from there and some from one of my askaris who was a Msagalla. As regards Dabida proper, the main mountain-cluster, I did not visit Mwanda, Irizi, Umingu, and Nyachi in the extreme north and west, or Secho and the second Umari in the far south, but I gained some acquaintance with the other areas.

Quite a few young Teita speak English. They are often mentioned as the most intelligent and go-ahead people of Kenya, and most young men in the southern locations, Chawia and Mbale, both speak and understand Swahili. Most of my questioning, however, was done by means of an interpreter. Apart from Swahili I knew something of their Kisagalla dialect<sup>1</sup> and came to learn a bit more of their proper language, Kidabida.

<sup>1</sup> Wray's little grammar is the only source directly dealing with the Teita, though only the Sagalla branch. J. A. Wray, *An elementary introduction to the Taita language*, London, 1894.

## A

If one asks a Mteita about his place in Teita society he will first mention his district,<sup>1</sup> and give the name of his lineage (*kichuku* or *kivalo*), then of his 'village' (*muzi*, lit. homestead-cluster), and finally, if one knows how to formulate one's question, the name of his main division (*kichuku*). The character of this division is not wholly clear, but a consideration of the main facts and problems concerning it suggests that the term 'clan' is not inappropriate.

'Among us, the Wateita', it is said, 'we have different numbers'.<sup>2</sup> These numbers are really numbered groups. (In fact, by using the Dabida prefix combined with the English numbers we might call them: wa-three, wa-four, wa-five, wa-six, wa-eight, and wa-ten.) They refer in the first place to the original immigrant groups who, arriving from different directions, settled in different parts of the mountains. Only one division, the Wa-nya, travelled by itself, the other four migrated as two distinct groups. None of the groups was genealogically pure, according to tradition. It is said, however, that all (apart from the Wakwafi infiltration) came from Mangea and were Teita groups, though mixed, to a certain extent, with Kamba and Giryama. 'Even among the Wasagalla one finds these numbers', they will continue, and this indicates that another distinct dividing line runs between the main body of the people, the Wadabida, and the rather 'inferior' inhabitants of the lone Sagalla mountain. It is true that the Wasagalla differ, both linguistically<sup>3</sup> and physically;<sup>4</sup> on the other hand, the people of the even more isolated Kasigao mountain are accepted as equals. The belief that these 'numbers' travelled as groups long ago does not, however, explain their character or their function.

Before starting my work I had been told that I might expect to find the Teita divided into ten clans, of which several were supposed to be 'missing'. It was impossible, of course, to follow up this hint immediately, but a piece of good luck brought me unexpectedly on the trail of these mysterious 'clans'. I found that in enumerating the main divisions the procedure in giving information is as follows: the divisions are represented by the fingers of the left and right hands and are indicated thus:

1. little finger, left hand—this is my father (or: 'I myself')
2. ring finger, „ —I myself (or: 'my son')
3. middle finger, „ —the Wa-Sadu
4. index finger, „ —the Wa-Nya
5. thumb, „ —the Wa-Sanu
6. thumb, right hand—the Wa-Sasadu
7. index finger, „ —passed over
8. middle finger, „ —the Wa-Nyanya
9. ring finger, „ —either passed over, or: the Wa-Kenda
10. little finger, „ —the Wa-Ikumi of the Wa-Masae

<sup>1</sup> Not the governmental unit but the sublocation, which is an original native unit.

<sup>2</sup> Statement in English; I am not sure whether the Dabida word for number (*mtalo*) was used.

<sup>3</sup> A Dabida man cannot readily understand a

Msagalla.

<sup>4</sup> There are types among them which might be described as Hamites. I met some Sagalla askaris who showed a striking resemblance to a few Galla in the Kenya Police, whom I saw afterwards.



Apparently the numbers 1, 2, 7 and 9 represent no groups at all or at least no existing main divisions; the omitting of the number 7 would seem natural if one takes into account the holiness of the number in general, but even more so if we realize that the connexion of seven = *fungade* (*ku-funga* = to close, to shut) with a group of people would have been fatal for procreation. In the same way it may be suggested<sup>1</sup> that no male could be included in a group called after nine = *kenda* (*ke* + *nda*, female suffix + 'inside-ness') which might thus represent the nine months inside the womb, and so is a specifically female number. Why the numbers 1 and 2 are not attached to divisions is not so obvious; perhaps because they lack any notion of plurality.

These groups are patrilineal. One belongs without exception to one's father's *kichuku* only and so does one's brother. And one's son again belongs to the same division. Thus they are unilateral, patrilineal groups and as such the *kichuku*<sup>2</sup> might bear the name of clan, were it not that officially no female may belong to it. That is, a daughter never could belong to her father's 'clan', though she did (and does) belong to his *kivalo* (lineage). All six 'clans' consisted of male members only, and all females were supposed to be Wakenda, the 'people of the nine' (see above). Though this might be regarded as the ideal pattern, actually this feature in tribal structure has lost significance. A number of old men suggested that the Wakenda were not their own female relatives—sisters, mothers, daughters, &c.—but their cattle, thus making the same exchange in ideas as they do, in fact, when they exchange daughters for cows. The well-known facts about exchange of masculine and feminine presents do not help us out here, though nomenclature may have some bearing.<sup>3</sup> But what is more, none of my informants hesitated a moment when asked for the *kichuku* of his wives, or wife, and mother. And this *kichuku* was never the 'nine'-group, but one of the six (or a seventh, the Wa-mbisha, see below, p. 30). It is clear, however, that there was a time when the number nine was not used to identify one of the main divisions. But why specific groups bear their special numbers is not at all clear. Does any time sequence in arrival play a role? The fact of the Waikumi being the last to settle might point in that direction. So far it is the only clue.

What then is the criterion for clan-definition, and why are these *vichuku* distinct groups? The answer I got was: 'The old men and the wise men might tell you. You can see it in the way they kill the sheep [or the chickens] and make offerings to our ancestors.' Probably more important in this connexion is the fact that for the young men, if they are Christians (real or in name), the meaning of their clan membership has diminished. If they are asked for their *kichuku* they mostly give the name of the smaller *kichuku* or *kivalo*, the lineage, Vweniburo or Vwenilago for instance. And if pressed for an answer they will give it as their opinion that the 'number' of their fathers is a 'religious congregation'. This clearly suggests that the people belonging to a 'number' demonstrate their unity at gatherings of a religious kind and hence the preponderance of ritual as a cohesive factor in clan unity. The fact that all females were excluded from clan membership might then have been explained in terms of ritual. The main divisions might have been, for practical purposes, cult groups in which the women perhaps did not have any function. If this were true it would clash with the information we have on other North-eastern Bantu tribes such as the Kamba and Kikuyu.

<sup>1</sup> Acknowledgement to Mr. H. E. Lambert.

<sup>2</sup> Plural *vichuku*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Malinowski, *Argonauts*, p. 365, and Fischer, *Man*, 1938, 181.

So far we know that the main division is a group to which one belongs through unilineal descent. A very important characteristic of the group is its function as a cult group. Though descent is an important principle in the *kichuku* its members do not acknowledge a founding ancestor. They even admit that the first people of the clan, their ancestors, were not all of the same ethnic stock. Thus, the clan is not at the same time a maximal lineage. This accounts also for the fact that the number of clans is fixed once for all. The lineages may increase in span and number, *vivalo* (maximal *effective* lineages) may split into major segments, but the clan system itself has no real segmentary structure. It came into existence somewhere in the past as a fictitious descent group, and will go on as such. Formally it functions as a cult group for males only and that keeps it going; it is an undifferentiated group of persons, an association of male Wateita first and foremost. But, secondly, it is a superstructure of groups interconnected by kinship ties—not by marriage—and thus females belong to it. Five of the clans regard themselves as being of common origin. The sixth and, as we shall see, the seventh are held to be of a different stock. They are non-territorial groups,<sup>1</sup> and because they are supposed to be exogamous, they are firmly connected by intermarriages.

The material I collected indicates that these are exogamous as well as patrilineal groups, so that the use of the term 'clan' for this type of *kichuku* would be justified. Strictly exogamous, at any rate, are the *vivalo*—lineages having a span corresponding to a depth of four generations. This 'four-generation lineage' is a more or less concentrated local group. Where kinship ties are still felt and their functions recognized between *vivalo*, in that they are district partners, even a lineage of wider span, up to the maximal lineage, is still exogamous. This suggests that the practice of exogamy may extend to the clan itself. Moreover in practice I have not come across a single marriage, out of a registered total of forty, where both partners belonged to the same 'number'. But only two of my informants made an explicit point of it, stating the impossibility of marrying inside one's own 'number'. The possibility of their interchanging the two types of *vichuku* (the *kivalo*-idea might equally well be rendered by the word *kichuku*), in making their statement remains but, on the other hand, the fact of identical terms for two units suggests at least an equality in major attributes or functions.

The Dabida word *kichuku*, connoting 'clan', was translated by my interpreter and by English-speaking informants as 'number'. There is some difficulty in the case of the Wasadu and of the Wasasadu—the 'people of three' and 'of six' respectively—owing to an anomaly in the terms; the usual Dabida word for 'three' is *-dadu* and for 'six' *-andadu* but also *-tandatu*.

Of the six parent clans, five are held to be original Teita groups. The sixth, i.e. the Waikumi, represents the Masai infiltration in the North-west, which might have been fairly late in view of the limited dispersion of this section and the small number of people of the other five clans living within the Waikumi's original stronghold, i.e. Mgangi location. An important consequence of the new political organization introduced by the Government<sup>2</sup> is that the chief of Mgangi, being installed as a territorial

<sup>1</sup> Though associated with recognized first occupation-sites.

<sup>2</sup> The whole of the three Teita Reserves, Dabida,

Sagalla, and Kasigao, is divided up into eight territorial locations (*mitaa*) each with an appointed chief as ruler.



chief, is at the same time an authority among his own clansmen. I would almost say 'a clan-chief', but the Teita do not know chieftainship in any form,<sup>1</sup> nor do they formally recognize any clan elders. Mgangi, as a governmental area, comprises the native districts of Mwanda, Mgangi-Dabida, Mgangi-Nyika, and Lushongonyi. The Waikumi only spread to a certain extent towards Mbololo through Weruga and to a much smaller extent towards Bura via Mrugua. The five other clans are scattered over the whole of the Teita Hills though there are numerous districts where one or more of the five are almost completely lacking.

The position of the Wambisha remains obscure; they are considered by the Teita to be a group of people belonging to the same category as the clans. It sometimes happens, when one asks an informant for his *kichuku*, that the name Wambisha is mentioned instead of Wasadu, Wanya, &c.; it might be supposed therefore that people of the Wasadu, for example, call the Wasasadu, in certain contexts 'Wambisha' (the opponents, those who beat us), and that the Wasasadu in turn use the term for the Wanya; but this is not the case.

Perhaps for political reasons, the Teita never admit that there was any occupation of their mountains before their own settlement two centuries ago or thereabouts. There are, however, material remains of an earlier population: pyramidal heaps of stone without ritual or other significance for the inhabitants of to-day, commonly called *mifingiri ya Wambisha*, the Wambisha pyramids. This suggests that the Wambisha are descendants of an earlier people and are still considered as a distinct unit though incorporated within the tribe. Their main cluster in Ruma, near Mount Wesu, is culturally not yet wholly assimilated and preserves a language of its own (the Teita call it 'secret') quite distinct from both Kidabida and Kisagalla.<sup>2</sup> They do intermarry with the six clans and, if it can be shown that they do not do so among themselves, we may speak of the seven Teita clans.

## B

The effective exponents of the exogamous principles which we found attached to the clan are the four-generation lineages referred to above (p. 29). Like the clans they are units designated by a generic term and by specific names. The generic term once more is *kichuku* but the word *kivalo* (pl. *vivalo*) is also frequently used.<sup>3</sup> The noun *kivalo* is probably related linguistically to the verb *kuvalwa*, 'to bring forth', 'to bear', and also to *mavalo* (sing. *ivalo*) which usually means 'fruits', but sometimes has the meaning of 'generation', 'offspring'.<sup>4</sup> The specific name of a lineage is always composed of the prefix *vweni* (*vwa* + *nyi* = in the people of) and the name of the known ancestor of the genealogical group: for example, Vwenimwanyembo, Vwenilago, Vwenimareko. If the lineage is still territorially compact, the name of its village may be derived from its name. I found two villages in the Wusi-district called Gwavwenilago and Gwavweniburo.<sup>5</sup>

This lineage forms the exogamous unit par excellence and is a cult group for most

<sup>1</sup> Authority, however, is one of the subjects about which I am not well informed.

<sup>2</sup> The Wambisha on Mbololo do not use this Kiruma language as far as I know.

<sup>3</sup> A synonymous term might be *vwenimwana* as Mr. E. J. A. Leslie has suggested.

<sup>4</sup> Some of my informants thought that clan and lineage were both rendered by the word *kichuku*, but *kivalo* was specifically clan and not lineage; in fact, the opposite is true.

<sup>5</sup> Sometimes, in Mgangi, a whole district bears this kind of name: Gwavweniwalo for instance.

common occasions, such as circumcision of boys (*kuchwa*). And though young people may not always know their clan name, the lineage name is known to everybody even before initiation. Membership of the lineage confers rights which are exercised within the district and within the village if it has a heterogeneous population. People of the lineage derive their property and juridical rights from the ancestor who first settled in the area in which they are still living and after whom they are named.

The juridical aspect is most clearly expressed in case of conflict. All Vweni-so-and-so are considered as a corporate group as soon as one of the members has committed a crime; and if one of them has been wronged he can count on the legal, moral, and physical assistance of any individual within his lineage, if the assistance of a smaller patrilineal kin group does not avail, and also of the whole group as a corporate unity. The lineage members will be called together in council (*mwandu*), and the councils have power to enforce their decisions (*njama*). If conflicts arise within the body of the *kivalo*, either between persons or between segmentary groups, it is the council of the *kivalo* which settles the disputes and thus preserves equilibrium between the opposing parties. Assistance is also given when help in the economic sphere is needed, either in the building of a house, when labour and material are provided, or in case of betrothal, when fellow lineage members may find the means for procuring the necessary cattle. But this kind of assistance is usually limited to the *nyumba* (see below, p. 34).

Sometimes lineage members are scattered over different districts, and this is quite frequent nowadays. Then they retain their names and, in cases of ritual or of major crime, they are still reckoned to be members of the *vweni* group. For everyday life, however, they become incorporated within the territorial group they belong to.

The *kivalo* is not a maximal lineage in so far as it is less than the unity of all the descendants of the oldest ancestor. In the case of the Vwenimareko of Wusi, for instance, both Mareko's father and his grandfather were remembered by name, the later, Malamba, being the oldest-known ancestor. But neither he himself nor any memory of him, served as the focal point of any institutional group. The explanation clearly is that his offspring are scattered all over the Teita area. He was an original immigrant to the Hills, but his grandson Mareko was the first member of this kin-group to settle in Wusi district. A general principle of the segmentary system, viz. the omission of those branches in the system which have lost all (or almost all) significance for the group concerned is demonstrated clearly in the Teita case.

As we have noticed the clan is not a maximal lineage either. The clan is a group more inclusive than the descendants of Malamba only, but no groups exist between the range of the *kichuku* and that of the *kivalo*. If, however, we accept the clan as a fictitious maximal lineage, the *vivalo* are its major segments and the term 'major lineage' might be used for these. The segments of a *kivalo*—the *nyumba*—we should then term minor lineages and the next smaller kin groups minimal lineages.

To summarize our conclusions: the *vivalo* are the effective exogamous descent groups and, for practical purposes, the most effective ritual groups also. They form the major segments of the clans and their constituent parts. Moreover, the concentrated<sup>1</sup> *kivalo* is a juridical component of the district. *Vivalo* variously related by blood and by marriage form the group inhabiting the district.

<sup>1</sup> That is, not dispersed over different districts.



## C

Before turning to the smaller units, the minor and the minimal lineage, the known facts about marriage and the individual family should be summarized. The individual domestic family, a unit without a specific name, consists of one or more households occupying one or more huts. If a man has more than one wife, each of them occupies a separate hut. The single or multiple homestead usually forms a part of a homestead-cluster.

Marriage is as a rule patrilocal, but exceptions are frequent. Sometimes patrilocal residence is matrilocal at the same time, but circumstances may cause marriage to be matrilocal only, and then there are two possibilities, viz. a union effected either with or without cattle transfer.

The rules which a man has to observe when getting married may be summed up as follows: He is not allowed to marry a girl of his clan or of his own *kivalo*, or any of the segments thereof. Moreover, he is not supposed to take a girl from his own village, though he is allowed to do so if the girl's father settled there as a complete stranger. In this case marriage is matrilocal as well as patrilocal (see below, p. 33). He may take a girl from any other village within his district, but preferably he should make his choice outside the district, for one of the fundamental principles of inter-district relations is the maintenance of ties by intermarriages. Preferential districts are those with which marital ties already exist, usually the neighbouring ones. A much stricter rule prohibits the marriage of brothers of one *nyumba* with girls (sisters and first cousins) also belonging to one *nyumba*. It is equally impossible for a polygynist to take as his second wife the sister of his first wife, whether or not the first wife is still alive. Another very strict rule prohibits a man from marrying the daughter of any of his own age mates.

In the eastern and lower districts, where rainfall is lower, the usual number of cattle transferred on the occasion of a marriage is 2 bulls, 1 heifer, and 8 to 40 goats. In the western valleys (roughly the Government districts of Chawia and Bura) a cow, a heifer, 2 bulls, and about 30 goats and sheep is said to be normal. I do not know whether the father of the girl has to redistribute the cattle according to a fixed scheme, but, as we shall see, he might contribute towards the marriage-cattle required for any of the young men of his *nyumba*.

The children born of the union thus concluded belong to the father's family, lineage, and clan unless he cannot afford to pay the full bride-wealth. In that case, I understand, the children may be reckoned as belonging to their maternal grandfather's descendants,<sup>1</sup> and a form of matrilocal residence may be linked with it. Illegitimate children, that is children of a union in which no transfer of cattle took place or was intended to take place, are in the same position. Their mother's *nyumba* is their *nyumba*. Another form of matrilocal residence occurs in a somewhat different case, though the Teita do not make any clear distinction. If a man quarrels with his own patrilineal kin, he may leave his own village or district and settle somewhere else, either with his maternal kin or with somebody with whom he is connected through ties of blood-brotherhood. His own people at home will certainly not pay any cattle for his marriage. In these circumstances he could marry a girl without

<sup>1</sup> This rule seems to come into operation only at the early death of the father.

providing the bride-wealth. The children would then be named after his wife's agnates and legally treated as belonging to her patrilineage, and the husband, the father of the children, would be regarded as a member of his father-in-law's *kinyumba* (or minimal lineage) as my informant in a concrete case suggested.

Another very different form of matri-residence occurs. As we shall see, middle sons inherit the more distant gardens of their fathers. If these plots are situated near a foreign village, though within the district boundaries, they might find a bride there and settle near their father-in-law's homestead. They would not do so before their father's death, unless they had had a quarrel with him, or with their eldest brother.<sup>1</sup> They have, of course, paid the full amount of marriage-cattle or are prepared to do so. This process gives rise to genealogical differentiation within villages, and this is important for district integration. Finally, a change of residence may be undertaken for the purpose of founding a new village, which will attract new settlers.

A married woman may return to her father's place, either for a short visit every now and then—institutionally necessary for some weeks after the consummation of marriage—or for ever. Normally the children remain at the father's homestead; the boys until they reach puberty,<sup>2</sup> the girls until they marry. If the mother elopes, taking the children with her, this may give rise to a serious quarrel between districts (if she came originally from another district) or between lineages (if she belongs to the same district as her husband).

The homestead-cluster usually shelters other members of the kin group in addition to the individual family, though this is not always the case, owing to the moving off of the married middle sons who will settle by themselves and occupy a homestead of their own (consisting of one hut, plus the yard and the granaries) in a cluster of homesteads occupied by *vinyumba* closely akin to their father's.

## D

This leads us to consider the nuclear unit in the Teita descent system: the *kinyumba*, or extended family. As a legal unit, the *kinyumba* belongs to the range of lineages, but as an entity in everyday life it certainly does not. It includes the father, his wife (or wives), his sons with their wives and children, and his unmarried daughters. As marriage is normally patrilocal, and both territorially and genealogically exogamous, a daughter, at her marriage, moves to a distant village (homestead-cluster) or even into another district and no longer takes part in any of the *kinyumba* activities.

Essential characteristics of the *kinyumba* are:

(a) It acts as a corporate group in land rights. Land and homestead are owned by the *kinyumba*, or by its head as legal representative. Individuals may own property, movables, trees, or garden-produce, for instance.

(b) It acts as a corporate group in cases where cattle are concerned. Even married sons keep their cattle in their father's cattle-pen, and one of the members, usually the oldest male, grazes the whole herd together, just as a young girl or a young boy grazes the whole flock of sheep and goats.

<sup>1</sup> Eldest sons never move outside the village; in case of strife with their father they usually leave his homestead-cluster and move over to the other side of the village.

<sup>2</sup> Then they will go and live with their paternal grandmother, who is living near or at their father's homestead.



(c) It is supposed to be territorially compact.

(d) It is not self-supporting in religious matters. For instance, in minor sacrificial activities performed at the homestead, it is not a member of the *kinyumba* who acts as a priest but one of the males of the minor lineage, the *nyumba*. This holds also in the case of the senior *kinyumba*; hence rank or seniority do not seem to be involved but rather the nature and the size of the unit concerned.

(e) It has no political rights.

(f) It seems to be a hybrid social group in so far as it counts as the smallest effective descent group and, at the same time, is a more inclusive kinship unit, since affinal relatives are acknowledged.

As soon as the *kinyumba*-head dies, the unit ceases to exist; the *vinyumba*, as production and consumption units, are now those groups of which his sons are heads. And the homestead-cluster which was the territorial expression of the *kinyumba* usually breaks up and some brothers may settle elsewhere within the district.

The group of survivors keeps its lineage character, but as the sons become *vinyumba*-heads themselves the old minimal lineage expands in span. It may then comprise several *vinyumba* and, as a unit with different functions, it acquires the name of *nyumba*. A *nyumba* is thus the lineage next in the scale of size and now it counts as a descent group only. It is not a territorial unit or a multiple household or a number of households taken together. The different wives are excluded, but daughters are included; the surviving mother still belongs to her own (that is her father's and brother's) *nyumba* especially for legal cases. For all common affairs and economically she will be incorporated within the *kinyumba* of her oldest or youngest son. The middle sons usually move away from their father's homestead and hamlet. The eldest one has already married and his children will be growing up in the old homestead or quite nearby in the old hamlet, and he will have inherited the nearest gardens.

The *nyumba* is important for several reasons:

(a) It is a dispersed group within the district and thus an integrating factor.

(b) It is religiously self-sufficient in minor cases (both for males and females).

(c) It has special significance for the females as a group which will provide help and protection. A married woman who comes into conflict with the members of her husband's *kinyumba* can return to the homestead of any male of her own *nyumba*, as it is the *nyumba* that provided the cattle given for her. All males are supposed to give her assistance, or even to fight for her if she is seriously wronged. And the whole minor lineage will be concerned in any feud resulting from her violent death.

(d) It has special significance for the males, because assistance in the collecting of marriage-cattle may be expected from all male members.<sup>1</sup>

(e) A specific economic characteristic is the mutual assistance given in hut-building.<sup>2</sup>

The male members of the second descending generation are identified by the name of the deceased grandfather; those of the first descending by that of the great-grandfather. Or to put it in the reverse order: If a man, head of a *kinyumba* dies, the

<sup>1</sup> It seems to me that this is perhaps at the root of the fact that the *nyumba* is a more important group in districts with a shortage of cattle.

<sup>2</sup> The last two items are not exclusively or

peculiarly characteristic. (d) Usually the father only provides the cattle. (e) Wives of the component *vinyumba* assist also in building, and even members of the *kivalo* outside the *nyumba* might take part in it.

- ▲ Dead males, females
- △ Living males, females
- ~~~~~ Lines of fission
- Thick lines: Descent lines
- Broken lines: Lineage boundaries

Generation

F I.....

F II.....

F III.....

F IV.....

F V.....

F VI.....

F VII.....

F VIII.....

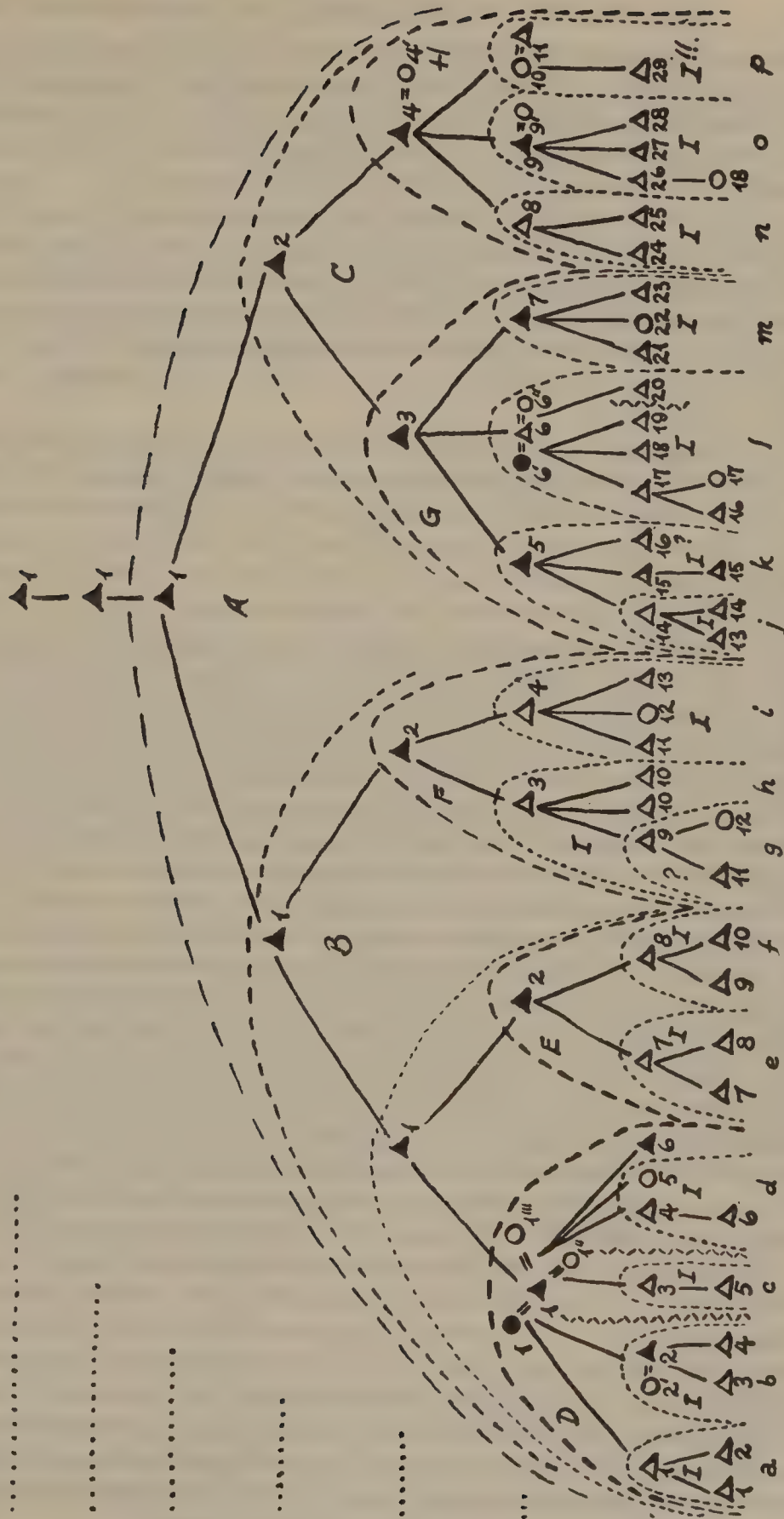


Diagram showing relations between Teita descent groups.



*kinyumba* once called after his name combined with the prefix *vwa*, stops functioning and loses its name. His name—now without any prefix—is transferred to his grandsons, who will put it after their own personal names. His sons are already called after his own (dead) father. Thus a *nyumba* appears to be a collectivity (members being called after different persons) rather than a community.

A chart will illuminate the relations between descent groups. For the sake of simplicity fathers are supposed to have sons only, save where daughters are shown for demonstrating special points (F.VIII.12, 17 and F.VII.5, 12, 22). In two unimportant cases I do not know the sex (F.VII.27, 28). Wives are included in the chart only to show the occurrence of uxori-lineages—minimal lineages springing from different mothers but one father (F.VI.1', 1'', 1'''; 6', 6'')—or to explain a very special case (F.VI.10; F.VII.2').

The lineages are represented in the diagram according to Fortes's method.<sup>1</sup> The diagram represents the structure of an actual descent group and is only simplified in so far as it omits equivalent members within the F.VIII and F.VII generation.

As I have shown, the unit we might call a maximal lineage is represented by the clan (*kichuku*) as a superstructure. The ancestors of F.I and F.II generations are not relevant for the explanation of any structural group. The first relevant ancestor, F.III.1, functions as the central point for the major lineage (A) shown in the diagram. This major lineage (*kivalo*) is called after its founder, thus: Vweni—F.III.1. This is not necessarily true, but depends on whether F.III.1 or F.IV.1 and 2 are considered by the Teita themselves as the ancestors of major lineages. This means that in another situation all descendants of F.IV.1 will be referred to as a *kivalo*. The lineages B and C, major sub-segments of the major lineage, may then take over the prefix *Vweni*—added to the name of F.IV.1 (or F.IV.2). In this instance the F.VIII generation up to number twelve tends to consider the lineage B as their *kivalo*; those of F.VII never do. Both major sub-segments are divided into *nyumba*, B into three (D, E, F) and C into two (G, H), sub-segments of the order of a minor lineage. All founders of the *nyumba* are dead males. The combination of D and E does not form a functional unit working in juxtaposition to F. That is, on F.V.1 focuses only a potential lineage of higher order which seems to have no function at all, though it must have been a lineage of lower order (a *nyumba*) in the past. The corresponding segment F still has the status of a minor lineage. The only living member of the F.V. generation, F.V.4, does not belong to the *nyumba* H but is incorporated into her eldest son's *kinyumba* N. Within the *nyumba* D I found one clear line of fission between the *vinyumba*,  $a + b$  and  $c + d$ , and a very vague one dividing  $c$  from  $d$ . A potential one exists between the future founders of *vinyumba* F.VII.17, 18, 19 as opposed to the young F.VII.20.

This leads us to consider the smallest structural descent group, the *kinyumba* (indicated by  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$ , &c.). Affines are excluded from this minimal lineage regarded as a descent group, but in *vinyumba*  $b$ ,  $l$ ,  $o$ ,  $p$ , and  $d$  I have not followed this principle; moreover, I am not sure whether  $g$  should be considered a *kinyumba*; I never saw it functioning. In  $b$  the head died some years ago. The remaining members are minors (F.VIII.3 and 4). The dead head's wife belongs to this *kinyumba* if we consider it not as a descent group but as a household; according to the descent system she ought to be excluded. The minimal lineage  $b$  tends to become amalgamated with  $a$ . A peculiarity

<sup>1</sup> P. 35. *Dynamics of Clanship*.

of *d* is the incorporation of F.VII.5. She married, but was sent back and settled on her brother's homestead. In the descent system she belongs to *nyumba* D, but her belonging to *d* is an exception. *Kinyumba* *l* is not yet divided into two *vinymba*. In the next generation one expects to get a picture similar to *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*. In minimal lineage *o* the man F.VII.26 has succeeded F.VI.9 as head of a group of which his mother, his siblings, his wife, and daughters are members, if the *kinyumba* stands for a kin-group including affines, i.e. a household. Otherwise F.IV.9' and the wife (not shown) must be excluded. Group *p* finally shows an uncommon case: the father F.VI.11 is not the head of the descent-*kinyumba*, but he is head of the corresponding household. His son, F.VII.29 belongs to *p* and H, his wife belongs to H, *he* is the stranger in all matters concerning descent.

I am aware that in this paper I may have over-emphasized the importance of the patriline in Teita kinship affairs. This, however, is due to the limitations of my material which did not permit the analysis of other aspects of kinship.

### Résumé

#### UN APERÇU DU SYSTÈME DE DESCENDANCE DES TEITA

L'AUTEUR traite, d'après les données recueillies au cours d'une étude récente sur champ, du système de descendance des Teita, une tribu bantoue du Nord-Est habitant la colonie de Kenya. Il fait une distinction entre trois principaux groupements sociaux — le *kichuku*, ou clan, le *kivalo*, ou lignage principal, le *kinyumba*, ou famille étendue. Les Teita reconnaissent sept clans, ou 'nombres' comme ils les appellent: ceux-ci sont des groupes exogames et patrilineaux, mais ils fonctionnent essentiellement comme groupes culturels pour les hommes seulement, et leurs membres ne reconnaissent pas un ancêtre en commun. Le véritable groupe de descendance est le *kivalo* — un lignage qui s'étend sur quatre générations; les *vivalo* forment les segments principaux des clans et le *kivalo* ressemble à un statut légal comme constituant d'une région. Le *kivalo* agit comme un corps constitué chaque fois qu'un de ses membres a été lésé ou a commis un crime. Le *kinyumba* est l'unité nucléaire du système de descendance des Teita; il agit comme un groupe constitué en ce qui concerne les droits de propriété des terres et le soin du bétail; ce n'est pas un groupe culturel indépendant et ne jouit pas de droits politiques. Le *kinyumba* se dissout à la mort de son chef et de nouveaux *vinymba* sont formés et attachés aux fils de l'ancien chef. Le lignage subit ainsi une augmentation de portée et l'on le désigne désormais un *nyumba*. Le *nyumba* est un groupe dispersé en dedans de la région, qui se suffit rituellement dans des cas moins importants. Tous les membres d'un *nyumba* sont tenus à contribuer au bétail de mariage exigé pour un membre quelconque, et tous les membres féminins peuvent compter sur l'aide et la protection du *nyumba*.



## THE BAMUM CORONATION CEREMONY AS DESCRIBED BY KING NJOYA

M. D. W. JEFFREYS

IN the French Cameroons, West Africa, live the Bamum whose population is estimated at about 75,000. Their territory is bounded on the north by that of the British Trusteeship territory of the Cameroons. Their western and south-western boundaries are formed by the River Nun, while the Rivers Mape (a tributary of the Mbam) and the Mbam form its eastern boundaries.\* The tribe consists of a recent ruling group of Tikar who, migrating from Rifum—now called Bamkin—settled among other Tikar whose social and political organization was of the lineage type so common in West Africa. This ruling group, who claim to have come originally from the environs of Bornu, rapidly conquered the surrounding independent, uncentralized, local villages and created the powerful Bamum kingdom which withstood Fulani raids.

Their sixteenth king, Njoya, was a most remarkable man. After inventing his own script he compiled in it a book of some twelve hundred pages dealing with the history and customs of his and the surrounding peoples. This script was invented between 1895 and 1900, and was then modified a number of times. When his *magnum opus* was written, he had come under the European influence of the Basle missionaries who arrived in 1906 at Fumban, his tribal capital. Hence, the division of this work into chapters and sections in probable imitation of the chapters and verses of the Bible. It seems that most of his work was compiled after 1913 because chapter twenty-eight (there are 183 chapters), devoted to his mother, describes her burial. Her cement tombstone bears the date 1913.

The following account of the coronation ceremony is from Njoya's chapter twenty-nine of which I now give a translation for the first time.† It opens with an account of the burial of a Bamum king and is followed by a description of the coronation rites. I have omitted an account of the rules controlling heralds, &c.:

*'Here is the writing concerning the dead.*

'In all the burials of the Bamum kings it was never the custom to bury them and leave their heads above the ground<sup>1</sup> nor were their skulls kept in a house as were the skulls of enemies. The Bamum Kings were buried intact.

'When a Bamum King dies a large circular pit is dug. He is clad in an *mfwot* cloth: two double-mouthed iron gongs are put in. Anklets of leopard-skin are tied round

\* Dugast, I., *Inventaire ethnique du Sud-Cameroun*, Cahors, 1949, p. 123.

† The local expression used for accession to the throne is 'to eat the king'. The new king is said 'to eat the king'. This expression is a technical one and appears to be a philological survival of an actual practice. The same expression is used among the Yoruba, where it is known that the new Alafin eats

some part of the heart of the dead king. The same practice is recorded of the Oba of Benin, and among the Jukun.

Among the Ekoi of the Cross River the heart-eating practice is admitted. (Jeffreys, M. D. W., 'Some Notes on the Ekoi', *J.R.A.I.* lxxix, 1, 1939.) I could get no confirmation that it ever existed among the Bamum.

his ankles and just below his knees. A twist of beads is strung around his neck and copper wire placed on top: ivory bracelets are placed on his upper arms: beads and ivory bracelets cover his forearms, and a large ivory bracelet on each wrist. A bead fringe was tied to his chin.<sup>2</sup> A skull-cap, decorated with beads in the design of two lizards, was put on his head. He was then placed in a chair decorated with the carved figure of a man and ornamented with beads. A leopard-skin was spread beneath his feet and a *menyi nja* knife placed in his hand, two bells and a war whistle were attached to this knife. He was wrapped round with *mekpinsa* and *ntie siye* cloths as well as cloths from many other tribes. A little earth was now put into the grave. When he is placed in his chair the *ngirri* oracle was on his right and the *mbanfie* on his left.<sup>3</sup>

A sheathed matchet was placed in his left hand and a long-stemmed pottery tobacco-pipe leant against his left chest. A bag with a drinking horn was placed in his right hand, also ten spears. The *Ngwen* oracle was placed before him with that of *Moma* behind. A calabash of palm wine was put in front of him with a grass platter of kola nuts. Earth was now packed around him.<sup>4</sup> His cap remained uncovered. The hollow half of an elephant's tusk was placed<sup>5</sup> upright, and a long stone<sup>6</sup> was put near the elephant's tusk, and wound round the stele was a liana called *nduat ngu*. The rest of the earth was now replaced. Half of the monolith remained above ground. Half of the liana and half of the elephant tusk also remained above ground. The monolith is now rubbed with palm-oil and on the top were placed some leaves of the *mbupwot* and on the leaves some red feathers from a turaco. An iron manacle is put near the elephant's tusk. A leopard-skin with a hole cut in it is placed so that the tusk sticks through and the skin drapes the tusk. A sheep was decapitated and its head placed between the monolith and the tusk. The grave was encircled with small iron gongs.

*'The story of the paangu<sup>7</sup> (sacred bundle) which the king carries in his hand. Three Titamfon<sup>8</sup> know what to do about it. Here is written how the Bamum formerly buried their kings.*

'When to-day a burial takes place and all the rites have been done then the grave must be cemented over.<sup>9</sup> If an iron fence is put round the grave of a king, it is well; if a shelter is built over the grave of a king, it is well.

'Here are the names of those who may attend the burial of a king. Two Titamfon and Njifonfon, in all three: and Monfara making four; and Njitampuo making five; and Njimoganka and Njimonfira making seven; Njiamfu making eight; also the first two slaves whom the king had before he became king making ten, and three twins, renowned for wisdom, making thirteen. These thirteen people know how to bury a king.

'After three years have elapsed it is time to make the *paangu*. A hole is dug on the right hand side of the king, and a finger bone and a hand bone are removed. When he was buried the hair shaved off his head and his finger-nail parings are mixed up. Half is put into his grave. Any teeth that he had lost when alive would be added to the other half, but if there were no teeth none would be taken from the skull in the grave. The hair of the head, the bones of the hand and finger, any teeth available are mixed up and placed in a small bag decorated with beads. This bag then becomes the *paangu*.



‘ The hole dug for the bones is filled with cloth before the earth is put back and the place made level.

‘ When the king dies he is dressed for burial. A cloth is tied over his face and he is placed upon a bed in the Mfum house where the *Ngwen* oracle speaks. Thence he is carried on this bed to the graveside. Njifonfon will now call the seven councillors to see that their brother from Rifum is dead.<sup>10</sup> The king designate, one of the king’s sons, now raises up and lowers his father’s head.<sup>11</sup> Whereupon the seven make hand-claps saying: “ Here is the man who takes our brother’s place and we accept him.” When the son at the graveside lifts up his father’s head he has already done so in the palace where all Titamfon were present. The double-mouthed iron gong now tones out sentences.<sup>12</sup> Those who enter the grave with the King’s body are Njiamfa and Njimonfara. After the burial the *Ngwen* oracle becomes silent. The reason why this oracle is heard at the burial is that it came with the Bamum king from their home in Rifum.

‘ When a king is buried the horn he last used for drinking palm-wine, his bag, calabash and pipe are given to Njiamfa because he is a descendant of a king.

‘ Njiansum stands on the left of the palace doorway and Njikumjua on the right, and they demand some of their brother’s goods because they have just looked upon his hand.<sup>13</sup> Each is then given a slave.

‘ The king designate is now taken and placed on the stone of the country,<sup>14</sup> the *wongu*, and Njimonfara now expounds to the king the laws of the Bamum brought with them from Rifum and he announces the rules which bind the councillors, the head heralds, the heads of the Mungu society, and the royal consorts to the king. When the exposition of these laws is over the king administers to those present the oath of allegiance.

‘ *The description of the ablutions in the Nfi river.*

‘ When it is daylight the king goes to bathe in the Nfi river. The night before, a twin takes the regalia: a short necklace of ancient beads; an ancient matchet in its scabbard and its ancient scabbard sash with an ancient bell attached to it; two ancient leopard-skin bags to whose corners are attached strings of ancient beads; an ancient spear on a wooden haft; an ancient bead necklace adorned with three leopard’s teeth; two small double-mouthed iron gongs are attached to this necklace. He hands these things to Mfuoliym who, while it is still dark, and accompanied by his senior slave, proceeds secretly to the king’s bathing-place. They bring with them a packet of “ medicine ”.

‘ In the meantime the king sets out with the Bamum people, his heralds, consorts and leaders. On passing the city’s protective fosse, the multitude sits down nearby on some high ground while the king goes down to the river with three Titamfon, Njimonfara and his senior slave, a twin, two sheep, two pots of palm-oil, two parcels of camwood-powder, a packet of salt, and the large double-mouthed iron gong. The king goes down and sits on a stone beside the water. At his back is a thick clump of bush.<sup>15</sup> Njifonfon now takes the “ medicine ” into the water and rubbing it between his hands gives it to someone to hold. He then scoops up water in his two palms and pours it over the king’s head saying: “ Here is the stone where your fathers’ family have sat before they were called to the throne, and as it is on this very stone

that you sit to-day you are therefore king. May *Yorubay*<sup>16</sup> bless you." He now scoops up some more water and pours it over the king's head saying: "May *Yorubay* grant you many children and may your war-spear be mighty and your work strong. May *Yorubay* give you much and good advice and increase your wealth; this water is the water of our land, wherein previous kings washed before you were born. They made a law that no descendant of a foreigner might wash himself here, or lead people to hold him in awe as king of the Bamum. It is well that such a one should perish. This law was made because many foreign kings were the enemies of Nfare. Because he carried a conquering war-spear they would be delighted to see the kingship pass from such warriors. Cease not to be a proud and haughty warrior. On these qualities depends the increase of your domains. *Yorubay* stands behind you to help you when you fight in a good cause. You must have aim and purpose in your work. *Yorubay* accepts you as king of the Bamum."

'He now takes the "medicine" from the water and rubs it over the king's body and head, the rest of the "medicine" he throws away into the water. He decapitates a sheep and throws the head into the river and then the carcass. One pot of palm-oil, one parcel of camwood-powder, and some salt are also thrown into the river. The second sheep is now decapitated, but only the head is thrown into the water. The carcass, one pot of palm-oil, the rest of the salt, the packet of camwood-powder are then given to Mfuoliym. Njifonfon takes up some mud and dabs it on the king's back, on the sash of his matchet scabbard.

'The king now leaves the shelter of the clump of bush and stands out in the open. The double-mouthed iron gong is beaten and the people cheer and rush to greet the king. The Titafofon instructs the people to bathe in the river lower down, at the common watering place. The people and the royal consorts go, and standing by the edge of the water splash it over themselves without unrobing.

'All the people and the heralds now lead off in a procession. The king walks behind the heralds, and the royal consorts behind the king. They head for Malim where Nfare halted, and there an old chair, a pipe-bag with a drinking horn in it, a spear and a feathered headdress are exhibited.<sup>17</sup> When the king starts off for the palace the populace hurl at his back laths of the light pith from raffia poles, crying out; "Nfare has returned, Nfare has returned, a warrior, the land is happy again." The king now enters his palace.'

[The description up to this point is taken from the sacred chapter, twenty-nine. A description of the coronation ceremony, chapter sixty-nine, written for general consumption, describes an incident omitted in the sacred chapter, namely; 'After the king has returned to the palace Njikumjua arrives armed with an imitation matchet, sash, and scabbard, made of the pith of the midrib of a raffia pole. When the king approaches the stone in the palace yard, Njikumjua attempts to frustrate the king by placing a foot on the stone. There is a tussle and a mock fight and the king triumphs by putting his foot on the stone. Njikumjua calls loudly for help: "Bamums, Bamums", and gets no response. The king calls but once, and the whole assembly yells in answer; whereupon Njikumjua falls to the ground. He is immediately set upon by the princes who stage a mock attack upon him. He cries out: "Oh! Sons of my brother do you attack me because I am alone, because I have no supporters?" He now jumps up and runs off while the crowd hurl lengths of pith at him, some men



run after him, strip off his mock weapons and haul him back before the king where he supplicates: "Nfare you own me. Nfare you are the rightful one." Njikumjua is now placed supine and the king, planting his foot on his chest, says to him: "You fellow, you miser, you never give anything to anybody". The struggle to plant a foot on the stone, and the reference to miserliness are additions to the ritual of the mock battle between the king and his rival and the triumph of the king. The original Njikumjua was a brother of Nfare, the first Bamum king. There was a dispute between the two for the kingship. A race to plant a foot on a certain stone was arranged and Nfare won it. Later Nfare tried to borrow wearing apparel from Njikumjua who refused to lend him anything. Nfare returned to the home town of Rifum to collect what he had left behind, and was slain there while doing so. His death was then attributed to the miserliness of Njikumjua.]

'During the morning the king puts on the *Mwet Ngu*, maskers' dress, as also do the councillors, and they make a circumambulation of the palace. On re-entering the palace the king gives them palm-oil, meat, salt, cloth, women. When it is broad daylight they shave the king's head, and immediately clap on a cap. Before the king may cohabit with a royal consort, he must sleep with some foreign woman who is not a royal consort; she is then sent off to a distant land, and never returns. Before he may cohabit with his wives, palm-wine is poured into a wooden trough belonging to the royal consorts, and a fruit called *garlegh* is put into the palm-wine. As they drink the palm-wine they must say: "We promise not to alter the laws that govern the royal consorts". Hereafter the king's first-born son takes the name of any foreign king whose complimentary gift first reaches the Bamum king. The Rifum king sends two councillors who bring water from this kingdom, from the spot where the ancient Rifum kings washed. This water is handed to the Bamum king who then and there washes himself in it.<sup>18</sup> The Rifum king also sends three of his consorts to instruct the new Bamum king in the ancient traditions. One has the title: "Mother of Nfare"; another, "Mother of Fombam", and another is, "Mother of Nso".

'The king makes gifts to them and the Rifum contingent now sing the *Ngirri* and *Nja* songs, and the king distributes presents among them. The Rifum give the Bamum king a gown, a matchet, a spear, and a sheep.<sup>19</sup>

'When the Bamum make war, they send a captive and the head of the first enemy slain, to Rifum. The Rifum king sends back a woman to the Bamum king.' [Here ends the account of the coronation ceremony. A few notes are necessary to illuminate certain points and to clear up others.]

#### NOTES

1. This remark is a reference to a Chamba tribal practice. ' [Among the Chamba the body of the dead chief] is buried in a standing position, the loose earth being packed in tightly all round to keep it erect. The head alone is left protruding above the earth and is covered by a pot. . . . Ten days or a fortnight after the burial, the grave-diggers remove the head of the dead chief, clean it thoroughly and hand it to the senior member of the royal kindred, who deposits it in the granary containing the other royal skulls.' (Meek, 1.)

Among the Wiya tribe in the Bamenda Division, Cameroons Province, who came from the same focus of migration, namely Rifum, the skulls of their dead kings are taken out of the grave and each placed under its own pot in a special mausoleum.

2. Fixing a false beard to the dead was a practice of ancient Egypt. 'The most singular custom of the Egyptians was that of tying a false beard upon the chin, which was made of plaited hair, and of a peculiar form, according to the person by whom it was worn. Private individuals had a small beard, scarcely two inches long; that of a king was of considerable length, square at the bottom; and the figures of gods were distinguished by its turning up at the end. No man ventured to assume, or affix to his image, the beard of a deity; but after their death it was permitted to substitute this divine emblem on the statues of kings, and all other persons who were judged worthy of admittance to the Elvsiun of futurity, in consequence of their having assumed the character of Osiris, to whom the souls of the pure returned on quitting their earthly abode.' (Wilkinson.)

3. The Dgirri is a secret society composed of the sons of the king, part of whose insignia is a large pot. In it is placed a long bamboo decorated with beads. Down this tube is blown a blast of air which makes a deep booming note. Mbanjie is another secret society, but here it refers to a double-mouthed iron-gong, part of the royal regalia. Only the chief may gaze on Mbanjie. 'He who sees Mbanjie is chief,' is a local proverb.

4. Usually African kings' graves are lined with planks or raffia poles, mats, &c., so that the earth does not touch the body.

5. Though the text does not say so, I am informed that the hollow end of the tusk is placed on the king's head. A tusk whose hollow end would go over a man's head must have been of great size. Among the Bini of Nigeria, the skull of the dead Oba was sent to Ife in Yoruba land and in its place was returned a bronze cast head with a socket to carry an elephant's tusk. See illustrations Figs. 68 and 129, Talbot, P. A., *Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, ii, Oxford, 1926.

6. I was not able to get the number of monoliths extant. There have been sixteen Bamum kings. There should therefore be sixteen monoliths, but it is known that none was erected for the slave usurper king Dguo, and it is unlikely that any was erected for king Mbiankwə whose reign was very short.

7. This bag, containing the relics of the king, is the sacra of the tribe. Such sacra are far more common than is generally supposed. The populace, as a rule, know little or nothing about them. Those interested in the secret keep it secret. Such sacra are known to exist for the Bansə and Wiya tribes of the Bamenda Division, cognates of the Bamum; they fall into the category of 'sacred bundles' to which belong the relics of the saints and the royal mummies of ancient Egypt.

It would seem that this custom is also found among the Southern Bantu. 'He [the chief] is the custodian of various sacred objects symbolizing the unity and prosperity of his tribe, such as the *inkatha* or sacred coil of the Zulu and the *mhamba* of the Thonga, both containing among other ingredients "dirt" from the bodies of past and present chiefs.' (Schapera.)

In view of the information just given on tribal sacra one wonders how correct is the statement that among the Bemba special attention is paid to such relics and yet they are buried with the dead chief, thus: 'Inside the [mortuary] hut there was a good deal of chattering going on and I was informed that Nkolemambwe was handing over the finger- and toe-nails, the eyelids and the teeth, and that the bearers were checking them carefully. If any of these are missing it means they have been stolen for the purpose of witchcraft and in the old days a real fight between the bearers and the embalmers would follow. These items are carried in the stretcher [the bier] and are buried with the chief.' (Brelsford.)

8. Titamfon = fathers of the king. There are three such officials. Each king appoints his own Titamfon. Their titles and duties are as follows:

(a) *Niifonfon*. He holds the hands of the king designate when installing him and is also the court intermediary between the king and all the Bamum vassal kings.

(b) *Ŋga Minyi Tutvet* is the intermediary between the king and the group known as the Dget Dgu, or friends of the country.

(c) *Ŋgu Kpwita*. He shaves the king every *Nyit Njua* day.

9. The reference to cement is proof that this part was written long after the German occupation of this part of Africa.

10. The king in council, where the council consists of seven hereditary members, appears to be an early pattern for a number of West African tribes. Here, these seven councillors alone have



# INSANITY AMONG THE BEMBA OF NORTHERN RHODESIA

W. V. BRELSFORD

THIS article is concerned with tribal ideas on insanity among the Bemba of the Northern Province of Northern Rhodesia.

Dr. Alan Gregg, the Director of Medical Services Division of the Rockefeller Foundation, states that 'Psychiatry as the study of disordered conduct is intimate to an almost suspicious degree with ethics, with cultural anthropology, with sociology, with metaphysics, with religion, with artistic activities . . .', and adds that many mental disorders are 'often discernible only in terms of the patient's relationships with other human beings in some given intellectual or cultural or social or moral system'.<sup>1</sup> He thus definitely emphasizes the necessity of studying the sociological background of the insane patient when cures are attempted.<sup>2</sup>

It is true that the background, the customs, and the world outlook of the African are altering quickly, but folk beliefs and the intangible, often magical, associations of tribal lore linger on long after other aspects of the culture have changed, and these probably form the subconscious focus of many a psychosis. In part, we have only to read Jung to find one school of psychiatry that definitely asserts this. Thus it is worth recording the present-day beliefs of the Bemba as to different types of insanity since they may provide clues to stimulate the investigations of future psychiatrists.<sup>3</sup>

## CLASSIFICATION OF THE INSANE

In our society there are a number of methods of classification of the insane. Medico-legal descriptions use such terms as idiot, imbecile, feeble-minded people, and moral defectives. Psychiatry has a more particular system of subdivisions that increases in complexity from the feeble-minded to the moral defective and indeed moves beyond that into the shadowy sphere lying between normal and abnormal behaviour.

Clear-cut definitions of this sort are not to be expected among a Bantu people. But from the vocabulary of names of types of insanity it is possible to gain some idea of what any particular tribe regards as distinctive symptoms of mental disorder. Cibemba is a rich language in all respects and there are a good many words for the various types of observed insanity indicating shades of difference in symptoms.

(a) *Idiots or imbeciles*. *Icipuba*—a term that might also describe our medico-legal concept of an idiot because it is a noun meaning a man who has not the ability to eat or clothe himself. *Kapupushi* denotes a man who can walk about, talk, clothe, and generally look after himself, but who has not the sense to do a job of work properly.

<sup>1</sup> Alan Gregg, 'What is Psychiatry?', *British Medical Journal*, April 1944.

<sup>2</sup> See also Laubscher, *Sex, Customs, and Psychopathology*, London 1937, for work based on similar assumptions.

<sup>3</sup> Ritchie, working in a neighbouring area, explains certain customs and characteristics of adult Africans

in terms of their early experiences, according to the tenets of the Freudian School (*The African as suckling and adult*, Rhodes-Livingstone paper No. 9, 1943). We seek instead to give the beliefs of a particular people concerning the abnormal and their explanations of the causes of insanity.

This description roughly fits our definition of an imbecile. A similar term is *icimama-buka*, usually applied to a man who lives 'by himself in a grass shack on the outskirts of the village'. *Icinsa* is a man who becomes 'a wild man of the woods' living without a shelter and eating leaves, roots, and grass. Similar terms are *wapupuka* and the verbal form *auluka* from 'to fly or disappear'. Terms for fools or half-wits are common, e.g. *icivelewele*, *icimpu*, or *icingulyalya*. An imbecile who wanders about the country and is liable to be violent is known as an *iciniluli*.

(b) *Madness*. *Ukupena* or *ukufunta*. This is almost a generic verb for 'to be mad' but it is restricted to the worst and most obvious forms of insanity. It includes cases that we should class as idiocy or imbecility, but refers especially to disorders producing violent conduct. *Ishilu* is a noun meaning 'madman'. The condition was described to me graphically as follows: 'This person does not mind anything. He stabs another without fear. He cheers when he is most painfully tied up. He swears and curses without fear and reason and he walks naked without shame. He does great violence and is the proper Legion spoken of in the Bible.' *Ukupuma* is 'an acute attack of madness which sends a man suddenly raving mad until death ends his sufferings' according to a native description of this type. A dangerous madman, bad enough to have his head imprisoned in a forked stick is called *lya mukoli*, and one confined with ropes, *lya ntenta*. *Akuelwa* is said of a man who wanders about and usually moans and cries. *Alisompwa*, or 'he has been seized' is a synonym.

(c) *Temporary violence or fits*. A man who lives normally most of the time but is subject to fits of insanity, during which he wanders about naked for a few days, is described as *wapupana*; one who suffers from violent fits during which he froths at the mouth, loses his speech, and falls on the fire is called *icipumputu*. Such fits often occur at the full moon. The phrase *icisa kumwesi* is used for a man attacked by madness at the full moon. Other terms for fits, probably epileptic, are *kupamwa shima* or *akokoshimusa*, the latter being used for a child. The term is also used for a sparrow-hawk that is found unconscious on the ground, presumably after missing a stoop.

(d) *Hysterics*. To have hysteria or nightmares is described as *kusabaila* or *kusaila*. A man who 'hears voices' telling him to do things, even to kill or to burn huts, is said to be *waluba*.

(e) *A Melancholic* is described as a man who 'has a heart' or spirit (*ali no mutima*); or who is sick in heart or spirit (*alwalo mutima*).

(f) A man mad or stupid from *bhang* smoking is called *lyampela*.

(g) *An Eccentric*. The term *uapuniuka* is used for a man said to be eccentric rather than mad and whose queerness is due to not being purified after certain acts (see below, p. 49) or to the fact that he is *cinkula* (a child who cuts his top teeth before his bottom teeth) who was not destroyed. He is always breaking his own pots and chattels.

(h) *Uluntanshe* is a wanderer who has no aim in life.

#### CARE AND RESTRAINT OF THE INSANE

The insane among the Bemba were never deliberately killed in the past. It was believed that if a man killed a lunatic the same kind of madness would pass to the killer. On the other hand, to-day, a madman who has committed some particularly



outrageous act, such as assault or arson, will be set upon by the injured parties and beaten severely. Often it is only outside intervention that can save such a man from death at the hands of a number of hysterical natives. The class of lunatic who wanders about stealing food also soon learns that he will be beaten if caught. The more violent or irrepressible type of lunatic is often beaten by his relatives solely with the idea of weakening him and stopping any escapades (*ukumashya*—to weaken or make docile). I have also heard of sleeping draughts being given but I have not yet discovered what they are.

Food and clothes are supplied by the relatives of the man, the duty falling upon those who would help the person in normal life. Those who have no relatives eke out a half-starved existence on scraps given by individuals or families or from the friendly communal meals of village life. The family and acquaintances have no shame or shyness concerning any lunatic in their circle. They will readily inform outsiders, even in the presence and hearing of the sufferer, that he is mad or half-witted. Parents do not hesitate to describe an abnormal child, as *icinangwa* (rubbish or a weed) and will state that he is not a real person.

Violent madmen are confined in an instrument the main item of which is known as *ikoli*. This is a heavy log, six or seven feet long, with a fork at one end. The fork fits the front of the neck of the man and the neck is almost immobilized by the iron head of a spear slotted through the fork at the back, thus closing it. The end, being so long, rests on the ground well in front of the standing native. A man so confined cannot walk without first lifting up the big log in both hands with great effort, and his violent acts are thus restrained. The ends of the fork are much longer than is necessary for slotting in the spear-head at the back of the neck and they are made so for a special purpose. If there is any fear of the lunatic becoming violent during the night the man is laid on his back in the hut, and the end of the log is tied to the roof while the fork is sunk into the ground on each side of the neck.

Should the use of the long fork-log, *ikoli*, prove inadequate to restrain violence, another instrument is added. This is *ikusu*, a board of wood about three feet long with a hole through most of its length. The lunatic's feet are turned sideways and put through the hole so that when they are turned forward again the log is above the ankles and the feet enclosed in a kind of stocks. Again the head of a spear is slotted between the legs to prevent the man taking them out. The lunatic can just shuffle along in tiny steps, but that is all.

Even with both these instruments the lunatic can use his arms without moving from place to place and it is sometimes necessary to stop the use of the arms. In this case a similar board is made into stocks for the wrists, which are pinioned with rope when the hands have been put through the slots in the board.

Finally the boards in which ankles and wrists are inserted are connected by a rope, which will allow the lunatic to grip the long forked log, *ikoli*, about waist high, when he is standing, and thus just to raise it from the ground. The rope, however, prevents the arms being raised any higher than the waist.

The effect of the combination of log, ankle and wrist stocks, and the rope connecting the two stocks, is that the lunatic can just shuffle round the village with great expenditure of effort and strength and can just sit and lie down with the heavy log across his lap or recumbent body. He cannot feed himself nor perform any act of

personal hygiene in a clean manner. When he wishes to excrete or urinate, if he is capable of telling his wants, someone lifts up the end of the log over his shoulder and leads the lunatic into the bush.

The combination of all three instruments is, of course, only used on the most violent lunatics, and if all three have to be kept on for any length of time the effect can be foretold. The man inevitably kills himself, usually by strangulation, in his struggle to get free.

#### CAUSES OF MADNESS

I have already said that symptoms do not always, in Bemba medicine, indicate causes. Epilepsy in Bemba eyes may be hereditary or may be due to witchcraft; hysteria may be due to possession by a spirit or to the failure to carry out some ritual. But imbecility may also arise from the same causes. Only in certain specific instances, described in this section, are definite causes assigned to definite forms of madness. In general an offence, an event, or disease can cause any kind of insanity. The Bemba, nevertheless, have several ideas concerning the causes of insanity that seem reasonable to us.

1. They consider that insanity in various forms is hereditary, and, since family histories are well known for many generations, it is easy to put the blame on to some individual, even if the occurrence is very distant genealogically. The original madness may have fallen upon an individual because he had offended customs or spirits in some way (*ukulufyanya*—to err, to be in the wrong, is the word used). But his or her descendants can do little about it.

2. They know that insanity can arise from congenital syphilis and usually recognize it, from observing the illness of the parents.

Whether cures are attempted in these two cases depends entirely upon the type of insanity displayed, for, as I shall show later, idiots and apparently incurable imbeciles are not doctored at all.

3. The excessive smoking of hemp is also believed to cause insanity. This is a belief that has some European medical support.

4. Sunstroke or heat-stroke is also thought to be a cause and here again is a belief that has some medical support.

Apart from these few ideas, most of the traditional explanations of the causes of insanity do not fit into European psychiatric theory.

5. One of the most usual reasons given for the milder types of insanity is the failure to be cleansed after killing a lion or a leopard or finding an elephant dead in the bush. The killer or the finder, when he goes back to his village, should not enter the village nor speak to anyone there. He should stand on the outskirts and, when he sees someone looking his way, make obvious signs of washing his head and body. The person who sees this knows at once what is wanted and goes to the headman of the village or to one of the older men. He takes out the village charm, *iconi*, which is kept in a grain bin on the edge of the village. This is a calabash containing medicines such as the claws of lions and leopards found dead or killed, bits of owls, hyenas, bones of men burnt in the past because they had bad spirits (*mpulamulilo*), and medicine made from various trees. These charms are made by specialists for new villages and are supposed to ensure that war, pestilence, fire, and bad luck generally shall not



fall on the village. The headman pours water into the calabash and goes and washes the head and body of the hunter who can then speak and enter the village.

If the killer or finder of lion, leopard, or elephant fails to be purified by being washed he will become mad. He will not become a complete idiot but will become *wapuntuka* to begin with and then, if he still refrains from being cleansed, he becomes *wapupuka*.

6. More frequently madness is explained as the result of failure to perform the intimate ceremony of man and wife known as *teke nongo*. On the morning after a man has had intercourse with his head wife, she takes a small pot, only a few inches in diameter and depth, known as *kanweni*, and heats water in it. Then the wife pours water from the pot on her husband's hands. This ceremony only takes place between the man and his head wife, not with any of his other wives if he is a polygynist. In the case of polygynists the lesser wives perform the ceremony alone, after the husband has left the hut. As a ritual it has many other important connotations that do not concern us here.

Should the man go away to the railway line or to another village or area, and there marry another woman and perform the *teke nongo* ceremony with her, he has committed an offence unless he has divorced, or will later divorce, his head wife at the village, and the punishment for this offence is insanity. All Bemba know this, of course, but the offence is still committed. The onset of this type of insanity, which is known as *mashyo* (from *kushya*—to leave, abandon), begins after the man has returned to his head wife and has performed the *teke nongo* ceremony with her again. The symptoms are those mentioned under *wapuntuka*, but unless a cure is undertaken at once the symptoms develop into the more serious type of insanity, *wapupuka*. The husband also suffers if any of his wives perform the *teke nongo* ceremony with another man. He, not the woman, becomes mad soon after he performs the ritual with the offending wife.

7. Another cause is allied to No. 5 and No. 6. Many men seek charms to ensure that they do not meet lions and leopards. A man therefore obtains the claws of these animals and takes them to a doctor who makes them up into charms. But the man sometimes keeps the claws in his house before going to the doctor and during that time he must not perform the *teke nongo* ceremony with his wife; should he forget that he has the claws in his house and do so, then he becomes mad.

8. One belief in a cause of madness is very widespread among other tribes too, including the Bisa and Mukulu of the Northern Province; that is the breaking of the custom that the wife (in whose hut the husband has slept) must not put the first cooking-pot of the day on the fire unless her husband is still in the hut. The husband does not go out of the hut after waking until the pot is put on the fire, or, if he has to go out to the latrine, the wife awaits his return before putting on the pot. If the wife inadvertently forgets this, she should tell the husband and he must seek curative medicine from a doctor to prevent madness. If the wife does not tell the husband, the kind of madness that attacks the man is of the serious *waluba* kind.

9. Puerperal insanity (*bushilu bwa nchentu*) is common and is recognized, but it is thought to be the result of the husband's adultery during the wife's pregnancy and he and his wife both take medicines.

10. When a man is going away for a long time and has doubts of his wife's fidelity, he obtains medicines which he cicatrizes on to his own stomach before he leaves.

Any man committing adultery with her will become mad, for the medicine has communicated itself to the woman during intercourse.

11. Sorcery is believed to be one of the most frequent causes of insanity. Sorcery itself is so large and complicated a subject that I do not wish to do much more than mention it as a cause of insanity. The Bemba belief, briefly, is that insanity caused by sorcery has been passed through some physical medicine or charm obtained from a witch by the person desiring to bewitch the sufferer. This medicine is often placed close to the doorway of the person to be attacked or along a path he frequents. Most of the types of insanity mentioned can be brought on by sorcery. As a rule the medicine only operates on the person for whom it is intended, but we had one case in which a Church Elder was accused of making a whole family mad by witchcraft. He did this by placing the medicine at the foot of a tree stump and then beating the tree stump with a fly switch, while calling on each member of the family.

12. There are several food taboos or regulations which, if broken, lead to madness. Eating too much meat is one, and many professional hunters are said to become insane. The eating of too much fat is also thought to be a cause, so that the eating of fatty fish must be moderated. The rootings of the bush-pig often seem purposeless and foolish, so a man subject to fits is not allowed to eat its flesh as that would make him worse. Some people say that even excessive beer-drinking will lead to insanity, but this is not a generally held belief.

Some people believe that sexual intercourse when both man and wife are drunk may lead to insanity in the resulting offspring. The violation of taboos by which chiefs are forbidden to eat certain animals with prominent lower teeth, such as zebra, eland, and water hog, may also bring madness to the chiefs.

13. The spirit of a suicide (*ukwikulika*) often returns to make his child or grandchild mad. Such an evil spirit is known as *ciwa*.

14. Incest is also believed to make the guilty people mad. A Bemba may not marry his father's brother's daughters but he may marry his father's sister's daughters. Marriage with the former is believed to be a common cause of madness. In cases where madness does not follow, the usual remark is that the man must be mad to marry his 'sister'.

15. There is a belief that those types of insanity or fits during which the sufferer froths at the mouth are contagious, the malady being passed on if anyone touches the froth.

The Bemba do not class cases of 'possession' as madness. They believe that it is the spirit of some dead person that has taken possession of the body. Sometimes during the paroxysm the person will name witches or give warnings of disaster. Nor do the Bemba regard as insane people who have irresistible fits of roaring like lions or crowing like cocks. This eccentricity is believed to be caused by medicine put in beer or food by someone who does not dislike the sufferer enough to kill him but who just wishes to make him uncomfortable.

Before ending this section on the Bemba ideas of the causation of madness I should mention the relationship between detribalization, urbanization, and mental breakdowns. The cry often heard in the villages is—'He went off to the mines to work and he came back mad'. This does not mean in native eyes (although it might to ours) that the reorientation from village life to industrial life caused the breakdown. What



is really meant, I feel sure, is that absence from home and tribal authority and the mingling with alien tribes may cause a man to commit some of the acts believed to cause some form of insanity. The sense of guilt produces the breakdown. This was also the opinion of Medical Officers of the East African psychiatric unit during the recent war.<sup>1</sup> Some Medical Officers in Northern Rhodesia notice that the mental breakdowns often occur only after the return to the village. The subject is one requiring more investigation, and Raymond Firth has called attention to its necessity in connexion with urbanized areas in West Africa.<sup>2</sup> All I can say as a layman is that there does seem a difference between mental breakdown caused by inability to stand the strain of urban life, with its feelings of insecurity and loneliness, and that brought on by the knowledge that age-old taboos have been broken. The native would not recognize the former, but he would the latter.

### CURES FOR MADNESS

Doctors who claim to be able to cure madness are well known, but no attempt is made to cure the type we know as idiocy. Treatments differ in details. The cases believed to have been brought on by witchcraft need the services of diviners; the ordinary doctor does not generally receive payment unless at least a temporary cure is effected. One doctor I know, Kasungu Chibanama, claims to have made an average of two cures a year for some years. The usual payment nowadays is at least 10s., with some beads. In the past payment was made in cloth and beads.

Most of the Bemba medicines used have a sudorific content. One main belief is that the physical cause of madness, as operated by the magical or spiritual agents, is a kind of poisoning of the heart and brain, and that one of the ways of effecting a cure is to sweat out this poison. The dark days of the moon is the time to attempt the cure. At the beginning of the cure the doctor places the beads he has received at the foot of the tree from which he is to get the medicines, and calls on his ancestors before beginning to cut and prepare the medicines. He then goes to the village of the madman and hides behind the door of the hut in which the cure is to be effected. The lunatic is brought in by his relations and as he reaches the threshold the doctor springs from behind the door and spits chewed up medicines into his face. Other medicines are then smeared on to the lunatic's nose, ears, eyes, and mouth, the relations helping if he resists. A big earthen pot is put on the fire and the sudorific medicines boiled in it; the patient is stripped of his clothes and his body is thoroughly washed in the medicines. Perspiration begins soon afterwards. At night other drugs inducing perspiration are given by the mouth and on the following morning soothing medicines complete the cure. At the same time the patient is given a meal of certain foods that had been taboo before. From the onset of his madness he had not been allowed to eat fish because they swim in a shaky manner, or fowls because they scratch, or beer because it 'runs to the heart', or meat because the blood likewise 'runs to the heart'. Any pots used by the doctor become his property. There does not seem to be any cicatrization of medicine, the methods used generally being merely washing and oral application.

<sup>1</sup> *Army Doctor versus Witch Doctor*, Ministry of Information, Nairobi, April 1945.

<sup>2</sup> 'Social Welfare and Research in British West Africa', *Africa*, 17, 2, 3, April, July, 1947.

In addition to the sudorific medicines, the doctor usually puts into the mixture some sort of *cishimba*, which is the operative agent in magical medicines. For example, in the medicines used to cure the type of insanity known as *akakushi musa*, a claw or beak of a bird is usually used as one part of the *cishimba*.

The following examples of cures illustrate medicines and methods. Kasungu, my informant, said that these were his own special medicines. In order to cure insanity of the *wapupuka* type, he first boiled in water pieces of roots from the *mutete* and *musoso* trees. Then he added the *cishimba*, which in this case is a piece of bone or skin of bush-pig or else a piece of any kind of hawk. This mixture is taken orally. Following this, a mixture is made up of the head of a python, salt, and bark from the *mubanga* tree. This is crushed up and scorched over a fire, and when cool the patient licks it frequently until it is finished.

To cure a violent lunatic a mixture is made of the crushed roots of the *kafulamume* tree and of early elusine grain (*mwangwe*). This is cooked with water into a porridge in the ritual pot (*kanweni*) (see above, p. 50) of the mother or sister of the patient and is stirred by the brother or some other relative. This mixture is given orally and causes the patient to vomit and perspire profusely. If this one medicine does not effect a cure, the leaves of the *mwikalampungu* are used. This plant is an epizootic that grows in the forks of trees, and the doctor beats the plant with a stick so that the leaves fall to the ground. He must not strip the plant by hand. The leaves are crushed in the mortar in which the lunatic's food is usually crushed, and are then placed in hot water. The *cishimba*, a piece of bush-pig or hawk, is added and the patient's body is thoroughly washed with the mixture.

Madness brought on by offences in connexion with the *teke nongo* ceremony is dealt with differently. Leaves of the *nusokolobe* and *mutetebe* trees are crushed in a mortar with the pig or hawk *cishimba*. The lunatic is stripped and left standing in the middle of the hut with his wife. A youth, a relative, climbs to the top of the hut, removes the *nsonshi* (the tuft of grass crowning the thatch), and through the small hole revealed he drips the medicine on to the patient standing below. As the water drops down the wife washes the body of her husband with it. The madness connected with the *teke nongo* ceremony is usually of a mild kind and the patient is amenable to this cure.

The number of trees and plants used in cures is large and there is no point in giving a list of them; each doctor has his own favourites. If a cure is not effected by one doctor the relatives usually assume that the patient may be incurable. There is very little running about from one doctor to another.

There is a sleeping-draught that is said to keep people asleep for a whole day but I have not discovered what it is. It is not much used on violent madmen but is often regarded as a preventative. For example, if a man enters his village without being purified after killing a lion the doctor may give him a sleeping-draught as a preventative if it is too late to use the *choni*.

In cases where spirits are believed to be responsible for the madness, a diviner is sought and the usual methods used until the spirit responsible has been named, after which propitiation is carried out.

Where sorcery is responsible, again a diviner or witchdoctor is sought. Once the culprit is named the relatives of the madman go to a doctor to obtain medicine to



counteract that of the first witch. It is used in the same way to turn insane the man who first laid the spell.

An epileptic is not usually subjected to the sweating cures. Medicines taken orally or tied in a tiny calabash or cloth bag to a string round the neck are employed. The leaves and roots of at least a dozen different trees and shrubs are used, including the various species of wild fig.

I should mention here perhaps a distinctive form of burial employed for the insane which is used also for epileptics and lepers. A lunatic is not buried in the ordinary way. A deeper hole than usual is dug and, instead of earth being piled on to the corpse, the hole is filled to the brim with sticks and logs of wood. Earth is scattered round the grave to cover the grass so that bush fires cannot burn the wood of the grave. In this way, it is believed, the sickness can escape from the body through the branches and logs and so vanish into the air. So long as it was fastened into the ground by solid earth it would remain a danger for others. For the same reason no mound of earth marks the grave. I have not heard of any ceremonial differences between the funerals of sane and insane, nor of any differences in the position of the body in the grave. Nowadays, at least for commoners, the corpse is laid flat in all cases, the old crouching attitude having been abandoned.

### *Résumé*

#### L'ALIÉNATION MENTALE PARMI LES BEMBA DE LA RHODÉSIE DU NORD

L'AUTEUR traite des idées des Bemba concernant divers types d'aliénation mentale, les catégories selon lesquelles ils sont classifiés, les notions quant aux causes de la démence, et les méthodes de traitement et de guérison. Il attire l'attention sur le fait que la classification adoptée par les Bemba correspond, à certains égards, à celle employée par les médecins européens et, en outre, que certaines des causes d'aliénation mentale seraient également reconnues par des praticiens européens. Cependant, les Bemba imaginent que plusieurs types de la démence ou de l'idiotie résultent de l'impureté rituelle, du manquement à l'accomplissement de certaines cérémonies coutumières, ou à l'inobservation des tabous. Quelques types d'aliénation mentale sont considérés comme étant contagieux. Les Bemba reconnaissent des cas de possession par des esprits, mais ne les classent pas comme types de démence. Le traitement courant pour des cas d'aliénation mentale est l'administration de médicaments ou de bains sudorifiques.

## SWAHILI EPIC LITERATURE

LYNDON HARRIES

THE Swahili people are unique among the Bantu of East Africa in possessing an heritage of written literature of considerable range and antiquity. The earliest reasonably authentic examples consist of *mashairi*, song-poems, attributed to Liongo Fumo, prince of Ozi, c. A.D. 1150-1200. Many of the well-known *mashairi* were impromptu compositions of the minstrels who vied with one another at the song-tourneys. Reference is made to these poets in an old fragment:

‘Wambao Ndiswi malenga, | wakizinga na fakhari,  
Wenye ndao ya kutunga, | kujitia ushairi.’

‘We are minstrels’, so they say,—with swagger as they strut along,  
And proud they are to rime, if they can rime themselves into a song.

The canons by which verse was judged were (a) the apt and precise choice of words, (b) perfection of rime, and (c) perfection of metrical technique. Usually the *mashairi* were not committed to writing until after their public performance, sometimes years after, and only such pieces as had won public approval were, as a rule, preserved in manuscript. Another type of poem was, however, set down in writing in the first instance with a view to public performance. This was the long *utendi* (plural, *tendi*; also in Zanzibar dialect, *utenzi*, pl. *tenzi*), an ‘act’, play, or epic, which was intended to be sung aloud by one or more to a musical accompaniment and before an audience. Steere, who compared the musical setting of such works to Gregorian chants, stated that a musical score was sometimes prepared, but none has found its way into the hands of European scholars.

Scholars like Werner, Steere, and Büttner have transcribed a few *tendi* from the adapted form of Arabic script used in writing Swahili poetry into the Roman script, but the number of works edited by Europeans has been small compared to the amount of material that is known to exist. The number of manuscripts of any one poem is, of course, very small, and these are usually variant editions by poets of differing merit and ability. It is usual for the same copy to be borrowed by Swahili relations and friends, and since the *tendi* are still in use for public performance the owners are naturally slow to part with any manuscript to a European. Before doing so the relations may have to be consulted.

All the more reason then for welcoming two important additions to our store of Swahili literature. The first is the collection of Hichens manuscripts acquired by the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies. For these Hichens was indebted to Sheikh Mbarak Ali Hinawy, the Liwali of Mombasa, who has made a special study of the history and authorship of Swahili poems. Although no copies of long *tendi* are included in this collection, it contains much useful general material relating to Swahili poetry and some valuable manuscript copies of *mashairi*. The second is the work of a European scholar, Dr. Ernst Dammann of Hamburg University, *Dichtungen in der Lamu-Mundart des Suaheli*, Hamburg, 1940. This book has not yet received any notice in this country, but it is the best collection of *tendi* that



has ever been published. It contains seven long *tendi* with a very reliable translation, and the poets responsible for the work, men like Muhammad (Kijuma) Abubakar bin 'Umar al-Nakariy, are poets of the best Swahili tradition.

Hichens attempted the difficult task of trying to find the origin of the *tendi*, but his conclusions are not very reliable. He suggests that the themes were borrowed from Arabic works read or intoned in the mosques at Maulidi or Mauludi, the birthday celebrations of the Prophet. This in itself is not likely, because on the night of Maulidi the Praises of the Prophet are sung and these bear no relation to the themes of the *tendi*. Hichens's suggestion that the Arabic works recited then were such well-known anthologies as the Assemblies of Hariri, the Hamasa, and the Kitab ul Aghani, is certainly wide of the mark. These again bear no relation to the *tendi*, and in any case would never be heard in the mosques on Maulidi. It is not possible to trace, at least in classical Arabic poetry, any sources relating either to the Praises or to the *tendi*. It is true that, in the classical period, and for that matter in the Koran itself, one may find general references to what is the usual theme of popular *tendi*, e.g. in Ibn Hisham's 'Sirat al-Nabi' we read of the Miraj, i.e. the Ascension of the Prophet into Heaven, which is also the subject of a long *utendi* of 660 verses in Dammann's collection. Nevertheless no classical Arabic work can be quoted as the direct source of Swahili *tendi*.

We have to look to the post-classical period of Arabic poetry for any possible sources, and this is borne out by an examination of the form of the Swahili verse. Hichens observed that the Swahili poets adopted the form of verse 'known to the Arabs' as *tasmit* (Ar. تسميط). The truth is that this verse-form was not used by the Arabian poets of the classical period. Although Freytag gives an early date for the appearance of the *tasmit*, it is generally considered that examples of poetry in the *tasmit*-form reputed to belong to the early classical period are not genuine. It is significant here that any direct sources quoted by Dammann are from manuscripts dating from the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries.

Certainly no long Swahili poem now extant appears to date earlier than the seventeenth century, before which time religious and heroic epics were composed in long-measure, i.e. with more vocalized syllables than the *tasmit* provides for. A number of short *tendi* are probably of a much earlier date, but these are clearly original compositions inspired by an actual event in Swahili history, for example, the song of the women of Manda when 'Umar I sacked their town and took them captive to Pate, circa A.D. 1339. There is always the possibility, of course, that even when parallel legends can be quoted from Arabian sources, the Swahili version may be an original composition based upon traditional matter which has no doubt undergone considerable modification in the transit between the Hejaz and the Swahili coast. This was the conclusion reached by Professor Werner in her edition of the short *utendi*, called an *Hadithi* (story) of Miqdad and Mayasa. Although an exhaustive examination of the Arabic manuscripts dealing with Miqdad had been made, not one of them corresponded with the Swahili poem. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that most Swahili *tendi* have some direct source in Arabic literature, but it is the literature of 'the dispersion', and research would have to be made into popular Arabic verse in such regions as the Hadhramaut and the Persian Gulf before any satisfactory conclusions could be reached.

Swahili verse is scanned in *mizani* or *vipimo*, that is, in the measure of the number of *harufi* or vocalized syllables to the *kipande* or line. There are many examples of verse in 6, 8, and 11-*mizani*, and most of the long *tendi* are written in 8-*mizani*. Swahili scribes follow the Arabian method by writing the verse in two lines, each medially divided. The divisions or rests are called *vituo*. These rime together, while the terminal rime of each verse is the same throughout the poem.

European scholars have considered that rime in Swahili verse is predominantly to the eye. Steere, for example, asserted in 1869 that 'in all cases the rime is to the eye more than to the ear, as all the final syllables being unaccented, the prominent sounds often destroy the feeling of the rime'. This opinion has been repeated even by those who fail to make an exact transcription from the adapted form of Arabic script in which the poems are originally written. Hichens goes to the opposite extreme, however, in maintaining that there is no such thing as an eye-rime in Swahili verse. The truth is more likely to be that Swahili rime in the *tendi* is both to the eye and to the ear.

When the professional scribes write in the acknowledged manuscript form, all the riming line-ends terminate with a kind of literary flourish. This may be nothing more than a calligraphic ornament, but another important factor shows that the scribes had at least some intention of making the rime appeal to the eye. This lies in the necessity for transcribing every letter from the original manuscript. For example, the initial letter of a rimed terminal syllable may be one of the following:

alif | , wau و , ya َ , 'aini ا , or hamza ء .

When these letters stand between two vowels they are usually, but quite erroneously, omitted in European printed texts. They are always written in the original Swahili script, where their omission would offend the most elementary rules of Swahili orthography and calligraphy. For this reason it is not possible to transcribe Swahili script into the 'Standard' script of the Inter-Territorial Language Committee, which was adopted without regard to established literary practice. The retention of such letters is often essential to the perfection of the rime-pattern, for example:

Swahili	'Standard'
<i>Hawawezi kukimbiya</i>	<i>Hawawezi kukimbia</i>
<i>Kutembeya ni mamoya</i>	<i>Kutembea ni mamoja</i>
<i>Ukapata na kuliya</i>	<i>Ukapata na kulia.</i>

The rime here is in *-ya*, and it might be contended that for practical purposes one could as well print 'kukimbia' and 'kulia'. But the rime is respondent with a contiguous rime, in this case the rime in *mamoya*. In this word the *-y-* is a functioning consonant, the equivalent of *-j-* in Southern Swahili. Thus it cannot be omitted, and to present the riming sequence the *-y-* should be retained throughout.

At the same time, the rime was meant to appeal to the ear as well. Quite obviously this is not so easily demonstrable from any examination of the texts. Although in spoken speech the stress is usually on the penultimate syllable, it is important to remember that these poems were not meant to be spoken, but to be sung or intoned. Was the final syllable or rime stressed by the minstrels when they sang the *tendi*?



In 1945 at Mikindani I had the good fortune to be present at the rendering of a well-known *utendi*, *Ras-il-Ghuli*, a work of more than 5,000 verses, dealing with the adventures of the Four Companions of the Prophet in avenging a Muslim woman whose ten children had been slain by an unbelieving king of the Yemen. The opportunity had been granted me of examining the text beforehand, and so I was able to observe closely the actual rendering, and there can be no doubt that the rimes were stressed in a manner not possible if the verses had been spoken and not sung. At times, the rime was only too clearly meant for the ear. This in itself, of course, is in the Arabian tradition, and it would be true to say that it applies, not only to *tendi*, but to most of the *mashairi* as well.

The themes of Swahili *tendi* are, of course, common to all national epic literature, —bravery, romance, tragedy, and history. The Swahili have names for the different types of *tendi*, e.g. *Utendi wa ushujaa* (bravery), *Utendi wa hekima* (philosophy). All have a deep religious inspiration, strongly Islamic, and most begin with verses praising God and His Prophet. Most of the long *tendi*, of more than 600 verses, have no real historical basis, but are concerned with romantic legends in which real characters from Islamic history (usually the immediate relatives and followers of the Prophet) are the principal characters. The nearest parallel in English literature is perhaps Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, and the spirit of these Swahili epics can be expressed in the words of one of our own poets who himself wrote one of the earliest epic poems in our language:

O goodly usage of those antique times,  
In which the sword was servant unto right;  
When not for malice and contentious crimes,  
But all for praise, and proof of manly might,  
The martiall brood accustomed to fight.

(Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, III. i. 13.)

The 'martiall brood' in Swahili epic literature are the followers of the Prophet, but they are naturalized on African soil. Just as Spenser drew for incident upon foreign sources and yet wrote a truly national poem, so also the Swahili poets north of Mombasa have created a national literature from sources that are foreign to the Bantu. Many of the descriptive passages bear a distinctly African character and, while the influence of Arabic is deep, the grammatical context of the *tendi* remains distinctly Bantu. It is a literary heritage of which the Swahili may well be proud and which it must be their and our pride to cherish before it is lost.

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(i)	Utendi wa	Herkali	Utendi wa	Ayubu
	" "	Sufiyani	" "	Isipani
	" "	Amuri	" "	Shufaku
	" "	Miraj	" "	Ayesha
	" "	Fatuma	" "	Isa
	" "	Abdurrahman	" "	Al-Akida
	" "	Mwana Kuponu	" "	Mkonumbi
	" "	Nasra wa-Arabu	" "	Ras-il-Ghuli
	" "	Siri li-Asirari	" "	Katawafu

(ii)	Utendi wa	Ngamia na Paa	Utendi wa	Sheikh Ali
	" "	Hasina	" "	Liongo Fumo
	" "	Barasisi	" "	Wajeremani
	" "	Mikidadi	" "	Kozi na Ndiwa

N.B. The second group are sometimes called Hadithi, but have the same form as the tendi.

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## THE NORTHERN RHODESIA-NYASALAND JOINT PUBLICATIONS BUREAU

G. H. WILSON

THE Bibliography section of this *Journal* shows an increasing number of books which, whether written in African vernaculars or in English, are intended primarily to be for Africans rather than about Africans; and an increasing proportion are written by Africans. 'Notes and News' items mention Publications Bureaux to encourage African authors and arrange the production and distribution of books. Something is going on in Africa which may be of importance for the artistic and social life of the people, something more important than the formation of new Departments of Government. This article attempts to make a provisional assessment of what is going on; to consider the aims and functions of organizations for promoting African literature, and to arrive at some general principles; to get the work of these Publications (or Literature) Bureaux in perspective. It is based on experience in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, experience over some length of time, but perhaps rather parochial. The Government, while providing funds from Development and Welfare accounts, has happily avoided laying down any set of rules for the working of these Bureaux. A great deal of valuable guidance—all the more valuable for being brilliantly informal—was given to workers in Africa for many years by Margaret Wrong. The writer of this article has had the opportunity of seeing something of the work of the East Africa Literature Bureau and of discussion with Mr. C. G. Richards; these discussions discovered a surprising and pleasing range of independent agreement on principles to be followed (and misconceptions to be cleared) in East and Central Africa; some differences in conditions and therefore in suitable attack; and the need for more liaison.

It will be as well, perhaps, to begin by clearing one of the misconceptions. These Publications Bureaux are not, as is commonly supposed, an afterthought to the recent campaigns in Africa for Mass Literacy, but represent a stage in a process which has been going on for quite a long time. 'Having taught these people to read', so the argument often runs, 'we must give them some follow-up literature.' Now this phrase 'follow-up literature' is an altogether unfortunate one, as misleading in practice and in principle as it is ugly. A book takes some time to produce, say a year on the average; so the phrase is misleading for practical purposes. What is more important in principle, if our work is to be really related to the changing lives of the people, we have to put the emphasis not on following behind or up, but on *imagining well beforehand* what books are needed. Our immediate job is simply producing books for people to read. And we shall get this immediate job in its right perspective, and set about doing it the more prudently, if we begin by recognizing that it is only because of the long labours of missionaries, Education Departments, and others that our present stage is possible; many thousands of Africans can read; a considerable volume of printed matter, some of it of a high standard, has already been put out; and African authors are on their way.

The Publications Bureau of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland takes over a remark-

ably rich living legacy from the Education Department of Nyasaland, and from the African Literature Committee of Northern Rhodesia. This Committee was formed by the Government of Northern Rhodesia in 1937 with the Provincial Commissioner, Ndola, as Chairman, the Education Officer, Ndola, as Secretary, and missionary and African members; the mixture of interests involved, or rather the combination of sources of possible help, thus received recognition and welcome from the start; the matter of the Committee's books was to be by no means purely educational and their flavour by no means strictly official; and it did turn out in fact that the Committee owed more to its senior missionary member, the Rev. A. J. Cross, than to any other one member for the enlistment of goodwill from various quarters, for his own contribution of ideas, and for the preservation throughout the war of a continuous liberal policy.

On this Committee, African opinion was counted at least as highly as European, and unofficial opinion at least as highly as official opinion: in an important sense there were no such distinctions, since official members spoke and acted very freely as individuals: for the Central Government at Lusaka always allowed the greatest possible responsibility to the Committee in its work; and thus this Committee, in a spirit highly unofficial, encouraged strange people to go on being strange, paid authors and translators and the like in accordance with no known rules except those of common sense, indulged in trade, and made a lot of mistakes.

The work increased until it became quite beyond the physical powers of such a voluntary amateur committee whose members could only give part of their time. Consequently, and because it seemed reasonable that the co-operation with Nyasaland, which had been growing, should become more formal and thereby more effective, the Joint Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland Publications Bureau was created; this was 'as from' the first of January 1948, though the actual processes of transition and integration started earlier, are not yet complete, and will never we trust be so complete as to deaden local enterprise and effort. Whilst avoiding a dilatory hierarchy of committees, we still hope to keep alive, through territorial and local language committees, something of the old spirit, continued access to popular informed opinion, continual critical help.

The Nyasaland contribution of books, although smaller than that of the Northern Rhodesia Committee, was particularly rich in original works by African authors, the value of which to the African public has been proved by proportionately large calls for reprints. Roughly simultaneous with the growth of book-production was the growth in size and circulation of the Northern Rhodesia newspaper *Mutende* which is printed in the four main vernaculars of the territory and in English: this development was independent of the Literature Committee and Bureau, though naturally there has been close and continuous co-operation. In both Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland we have been able to count on an increasing output of potential readers from Mission and Government schools, the work of our Education Departments having been continued and in fact expanded during the war and since.

The general aim of the Publications Bureau of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland is to assist in the development—mental, political, economic, and social—of the people of those territories; but within this general aim we have set ourselves the highly specific aim of putting the whole business of book-production and distribution on a



commercial basis at the end of eight years. Even if we do not succeed entirely in that time it is good to have some such specific aim by which to measure the extent of our success; to guide us meantime in defining our functions in relation to others already on the job, to authors and translators, publishers, booksellers, and the reading public; and to help us integrate our work with the good works of numerous departments, institutions, and persons working on the same general aim.

It needs to be emphasized that this specific aim of putting the whole business of book-production and distribution on to a commercial basis, contains objectives which are sound in themselves. Authors are to be discovered and encouraged because we believe in discovering and encouraging authors. Their works and translated books are to be made available to the African public because a civilized public should be able to get books. We use established publishers as much as possible, not as a temporary convenience but because that is the best way of publishing. We want to put bookselling on an ordinary commercial basis as soon as may be because we believe that the test of sales is a sound test and that ordinary trade is good; we are speeding up a normal process, not initiating a grand abnormal project.

David Livingstone (who died in Northern Rhodesia in 1873) attached great importance to the expansion of trade in these parts, not only as a means of combating slavery but as an essential part of the whole process of opening up Africa. It was largely due to this conviction that the men of the African Lakes Corporation came out among the earlier pioneers of Nyasaland to organize retail trade. David Livingstone would not be happy (nor should we) about all the spiritual and social by-products of the economic development which trade, mining, and industry have brought since his time; there are many distressing problems; but that same economic development which presents us with these problems presents us also with opportunities for solving them. So our task of enriching people's lives by literature can only be dealt with properly by coming in on continued economic development, and making the business of book-production and book-buying a part of the normal business and life of the country.

In all social development schemes the support of popular understanding and enthusiasm and the willing co-operation of the rising African intelligentsia is necessary. To this end financial provision for various economic schemes is not enough, political representation is not enough; for the building-up of an actively free civilized community something more is required, and an important contribution to that something more consists in the interaction between advanced and advancing minds by way of literature. For there is in this community which exists through books some sort of necessary fourth estate of any civilized realm; and so it will be in Africa, provided we remember that Publications Bureaux are temporary institutions and need to be as unbureaucratic as may be while they exist.

It is in this light that we should view our subsidiary function of acting as agent for the Agricultural, Medical, and other Social Service Departments of Governments. We are admittedly trying to put something across; but we want to do it so far as possible in an attractive African style; we are giving specialist help to make specialist advice readily comprehensible rather than handing on instructions. More immediately we want our books to sell, and instructions do not sell well.

Some of our books (e.g. the book *Save Our Soil*) are subsidized so as to bring down

the selling-price; merely by existing we constitute a subsidy; but we always sell our books and do not give them away to the public or schools. Everyone has heard the maxim that ' people do not appreciate what they do not pay for ', but there are other more valid reasons. (a) Everyone naturally distrusts what is given out as obvious propaganda and, as one of our more reliable African advisers has put it, ' nowadays Africans are getting spoon-fed-up '. (b) There is the practical fact that books which have in the past been given out free, mostly to schools, have disappeared off the face of the earth with incredible rapidity and completeness, so that when we have come to putting out new editions (such as *The Music Makers* or *Travels in Northern Rhodesia*) it has been extremely difficult to find even the few copies wanted for re-editing and reprinting. (c) In order to know what books we should publish it is very useful to have information, in the form of records of sales, about the relative popularity or unpopularity of books published in the past, rather than to trust entirely to our own judgement and the opinions of Committee members and readers including Africans; their judgements are very helpful; but actual sales figures give firmer evidence of the effective opinions of a larger number of people. (d) We are thus given a means of helping in a small way in the adjustment of African society to modern conditions; we test and adapt ourselves, we feel our way; or rather we provide Africans with a means of feeling their own way and adapting themselves. So our policy of selling books is indirectly a part of our whole policy of bringing Africans, with their cultural contribution, into world affairs, and bringing world affairs to them.

The reader, or at any rate the reader with a good memory, will have noticed that our thinking on this matter owes a great deal to the studies which appeared in this *Journal* and elsewhere under the sponsorship of the International African Institute, particularly round about 1937, dealing with problems of culture-contact and with the applicability of sociology to practical issues. We cannot contribute much directly to such studies, though analyses of sales and therefore of changing public tastes will, we hope, be interesting. Our work cannot be regarded as one of pure scientific inquiry and experiment, since we always act on a broad faith in the future of Africa, and at all points have to make particular decisions, for better or worse, in matters of taste and economic probabilities; all we do is thus inevitably biased from a strictly scientific point of view. But we try to preserve an inquiring experimental attitude and should welcome more research into the effects of our work. Meantime, it is proper both to claim and to acknowledge the Institute as one of our grandfathers.

Our great-grandfather, the reader will also have noticed, is John Milton; for we are to a large extent applying to our times the principles of maximum freedom for publishing set forth in the ' Areopagitica '. Perhaps it would be as well to mention here that in favouring the use of private publishing firms, and the intention to hand over to them, rather than to start Government presses with a view to setting up public corporations, we imply no general theory of how the provision of commodities and services other than books ought to be dealt with. One way or another we hope people will get more money in order to buy more books; and in a wider sense increasing riches in books is inevitably mixed up with the increasing wealth of the nation.

Our trading accounts are run on commercial lines; but that does not mean that we are a purely commercial proposition from the start; if that were possible there would be no need for us to exist at all. Meantime, we look after the interests of authors,

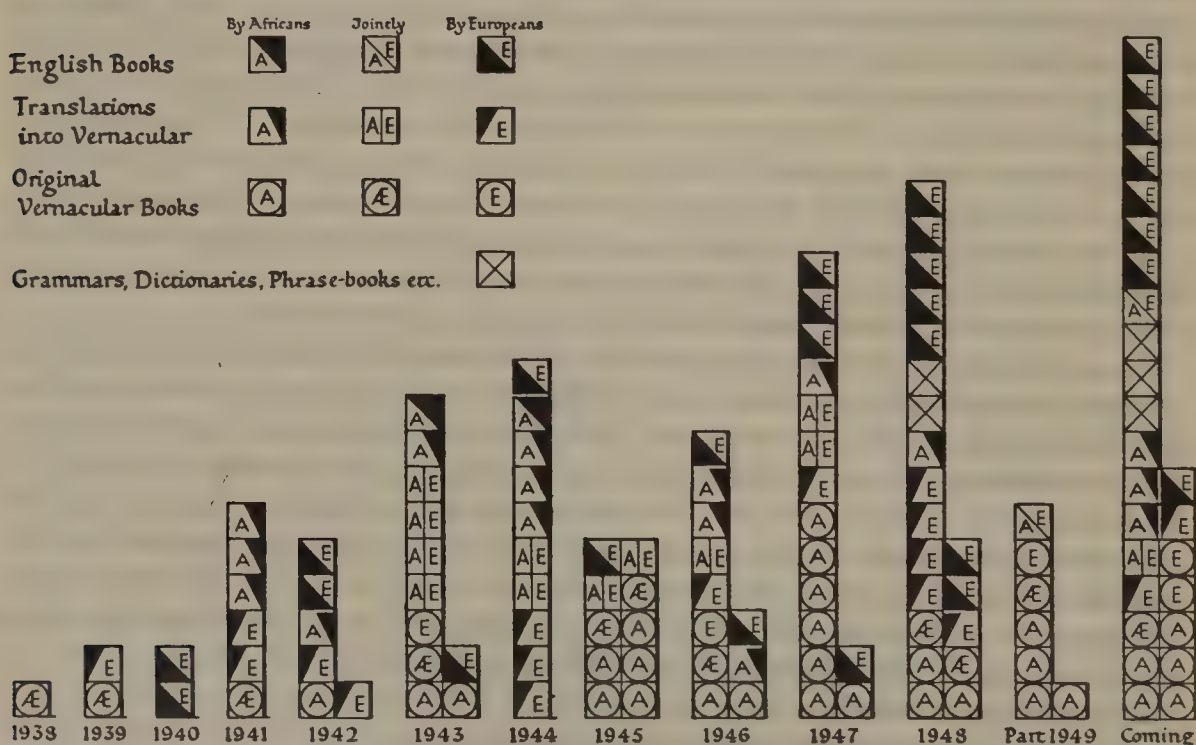


# (A) ANALYSIS BY LANGUAGES

(with reference to Guthrie's classification of Vernaculars)



# (B) ANALYSIS BY AUTHORSHIP ETC.



One square represents one edition (or impression) irrespective of number of books or pages. Columns on the left show new books for each year, with reprints on the right.

publishers, and distributors by means of an interlocking system of guarantees and price-controls and subsidies (in some cases): the incidence of these is gradually removed as progress is made. The essential feature of the system is that we get independent publishers to take books over whilst guaranteeing to buy and sell an agreed number of each over a period, usually three years.

The establishment of the book-trade in backward territories may go through two or three or all (but not necessarily all) of the following stages:

- (i) *a.* Production by missions of mainly religious literature, often at small, local Mission Presses: sometimes with Government subsidies.  
*b.* Missionary production of general literature with public subsidies.
- (ii) Production of books, mainly for educational or propagandist use, by Government Printers; often for free distribution to schools, &c.
- (iii) Production of books by such institutions as the African Literature Committee and the Education Department in Nyasaland through Mission, Government, or commercial printers; the Committee or Department buys the whole printing outright and then arranges sales.
- (iv) A system by which a Government Committee or Bureau or Education Department guarantees to independent publishers the sale of books (but does not buy whole printings outright), and arranges a related system of distribution. This method, if successful, leads to the final stage.
- (v) The book-trade in the countries concerned is set on its feet.

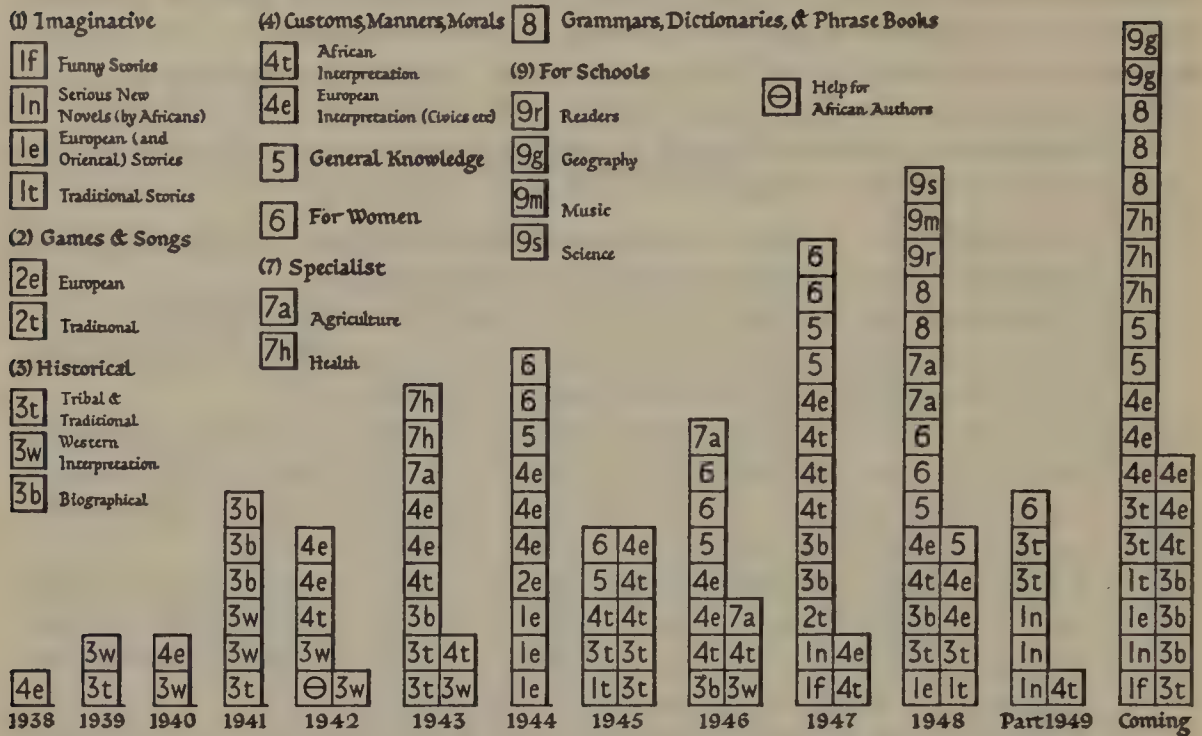
There is no hard and fast division between these stages, and in proceeding from (i) to (v) it may be possible to skip one or two of the intervening stages, and in some places stage (v) may never be reached, but the broad position in these Territories is that we are now passing rapidly from stage (iii) to stage (iv) and have reasonable hope of passing from stage (iv) to stage (v). Graph D does not show the considerable volume of books produced independently by Missions at stage (i) (*a*) since, whilst acknowledging their value, we do not lay claim to them. Similarly, books produced at stage (v) are not shown, though books in transition from stage (iv) to stage (v) are shown. Stage (ii) is not shown, though certain books originally produced by this retrograde method have proved their quality in spite of it, have been pulled out of it, and reproduced after revision within the system of stage (iv), and are there shown.

There is no suggestion that our particular technique of guaranteeing sales and controlling prices and subsidizing is the best for all territories: for example, where there has been very little literary development, or where people are tied down by pedantic orthographies to a few presses or one, it may be necessary to move from stage (ii) to the setting-up of a press and public corporation; or again, where strong vested interests have been set up in connexion with stage (i) it may be advisable to provide more competition on the lines of stage (iii); or where there is a large population and a sufficient distribution system in existence, less support, control, and direction at stage (iv) may be feasible than that which we propose. But while our particular methods do not constitute a set of formulae to be applied in all circumstances, the principles underlying them need perhaps to be underlined. The first reaction of the enthusiastic tiro to news of our efforts is almost always 'Have you got a press?' or even 'But have you not got a press?' So first it is necessary to emphasize that direct

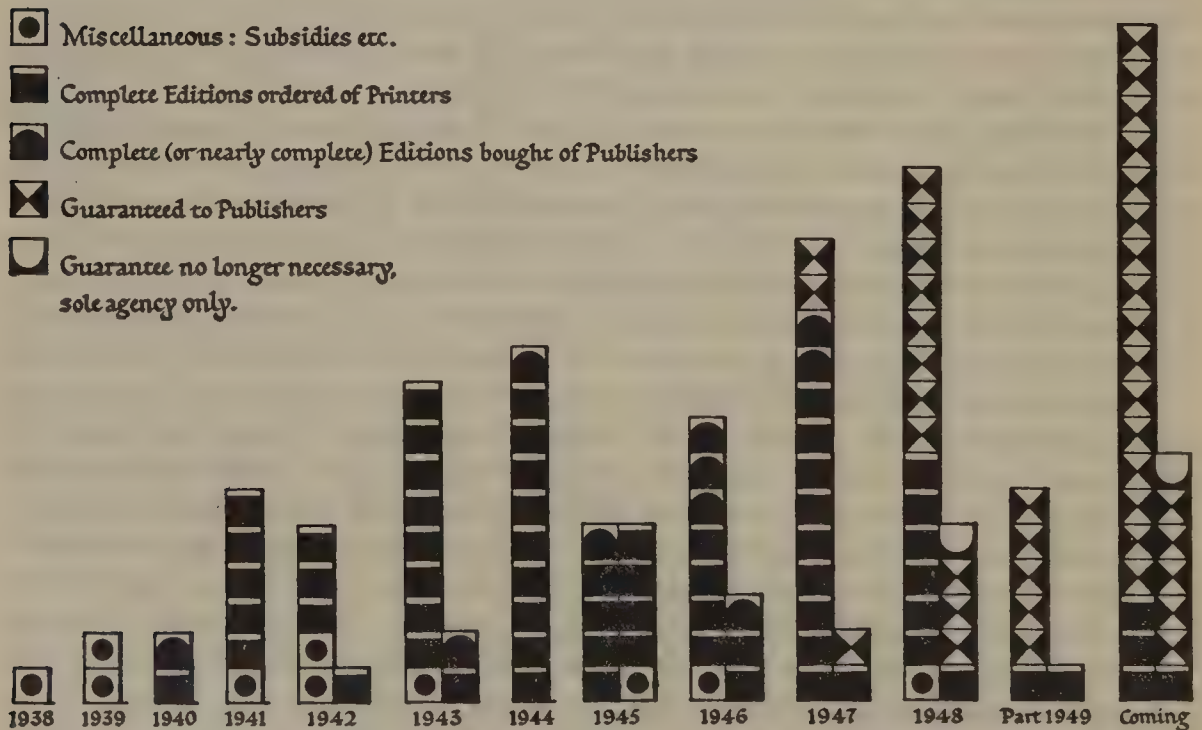


## (C) ANALYSIS BY SUBJECT MATTER

(Classification sometimes rather arbitrary)






## (D) ANALYSIS BY FINANCIAL METHOD

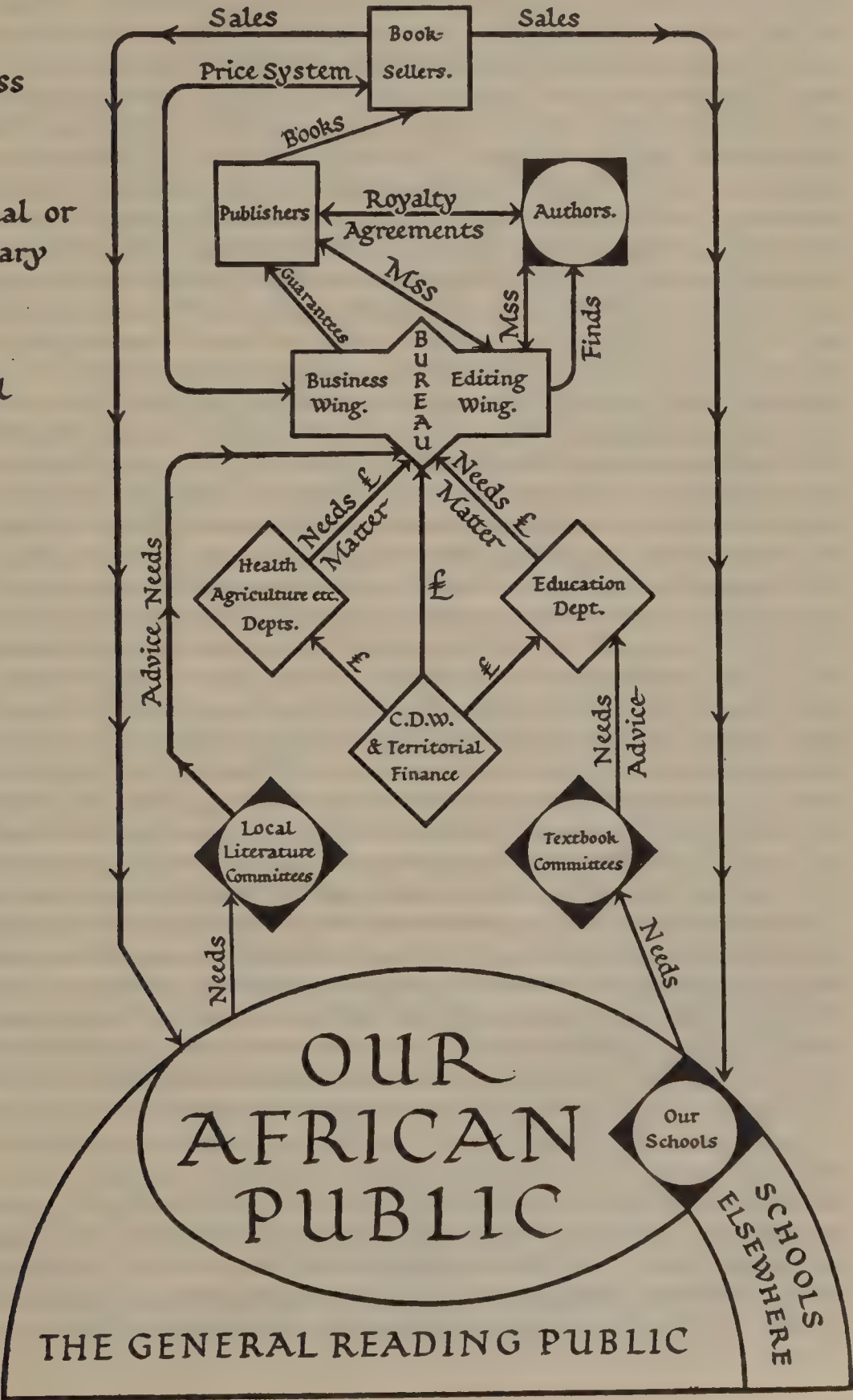


One square represents one edition (or impression) irrespective of number of books or pages. Columns on the left show new books for each year, with reprints on the right.

# (E).DIAGRAM OF ORGANIZATION

(over-simplified)

-  Business
-  Personal or Voluntary
-  Official





printing would be neither the cheapest nor in other important ways the best way of supplying literature. Secondly, we need to emphasize that distribution is the hub of our problem. For both the publishing and distribution of books we aim at commercialization and use commercial methods as much as possible from the start.

It may seem paradoxical that, in order to get things on a commercial basis, we should do an uncommercial thing and plan, for some years, simultaneously to impose a Government control on prices and to lose on certain books, but that is in fact what we should do, for three reasons. (i) Until a good system of distribution is set up throughout these territories, including the rural areas, we cannot arrange for the bringing-out of editions of books as large as will then be possible. We have to bring out in the meantime relatively small and therefore expensive editions, and, in effect, subsidize them by selling at a slight loss; thus we popularize book-buying and in time it will be possible to bring out larger editions and sell them at the same sort of price without loss. By means of relatively very small subsidies we can help publishers who have shown an enterprising spirit to co-operate with us, and at the same time help distributors, who otherwise might prefer a less urgent approach based on steady slow expansion largely confined to urban centres and schools. (ii) We still have to collect information on public tastes and take risks on arranging the production of books without knowing for certain whether they will sell well. It is also our duty to bring out certain books about the sales of which we are doubtful. We may in time create a taste for books of types not yet highly saleable; at any rate we shall discover what types of book sell well and what types it is practically no use trying to push. For instance, the indications at present are that local histories sell well whereas novels do not, and that morals sell better than agriculture, but we may find that the position changes and meanwhile it is our business to take risks in order to find out. The Education and other Social Service Departments will grant subsidies from territorial funds for the books which concern them, but this Bureau has also to push books not specifically concerned with any Government Department, i.e., books of general interest for sale to the African public—such books being, in fact, the Bureau's main concern. (iii) Closely connected with (ii) is our duty to encourage African authors, not only verbally but by building up a happy set of relationships between them and publishers and booksellers and the public; and this involves big risks at first.

Our system of subsidizing, guaranteeing sales to publishers, and fixing local prices is a technical accountancy matter of little interest to the general reader. But a few points call for remark. (a) We have received a great deal of help from Accounting Officers of these Governments and the Colonial Audit. (b) We keep our effective subsidies as low as possible and we do not apply them at all to books which we expect to sell well; this not only for obvious financial reasons but on principle. (c) Our system of fixing prices is an adaptation of the established system of the book-trade: we do not, in order to push sales, directly employ booksellers at salaries out of all proportion to the receipts on the books they sell (as we have often been urged to do), but work on the basis of normal though generous discounts; here also aiming at complete commercialization in time. (d) We are going all out, from the start, for the payment of royalties to authors in accordance with the ordinary practice of the book-trade; the work of authorship is one of great and detailed responsibility; we need to get the best possible work from our authors and the worker must be worthy of his hire. (e) Finally,

our guarantees to publishers are not charitable guesses, but serious efforts to estimate the probable market for each book, based increasingly on our analyses of sales of previous books. Meantime by co-operating in this way we all spread our risks and a wider variety of books is made available.

Little attempt has been made in this article to answer directly some of the problems which arise. Certain aspects, such as the linguistic, have been written about a good deal already. For other questions, particularly those concerned with distribution and its improvement, the data we have collected are not yet sufficient or sufficiently analysed to be of much value to anyone but ourselves; we hope to be able to present our data in a methodical and useful form later on. Some other questions, for instance the details of our relationships with other Departments and agencies, would be of interest to only a few readers. On a number of these outstanding questions, however, the reader may find useful or at least interesting indications and suggestions from a study of the graphs.

Enough has perhaps been said (and readers are referred to Graph C) to make it clear that the provision of school text-books is only one of our functions: we act as agents for the Education Department, putting them and authors in touch with suitable publishers; but it is they and their specialist Committees, not we, who decide what school books are needed, and get them ready. We welcome these opportunities for dealing with reasonably assured 'bread-and-butter lines', but our scope is wider and our chief concern is with the general public. Equally, we are tremendously indebted to the schools of these Territories for providing us with people ready to receive our books; with so many thousands of people who can read it is much easier to create a reading public than it might have been.

It so happens that in Lusaka our near neighbours are the Water Development Department; and this seems to me to be a happy chance not only because they are good neighbours, but also because they provide a physical parable of our work. The machines with which they get their results appear at first fantastic, as do some of our devices. They make plans as we do, but just as their planning is always subject to the incalculable factor of the Central African rains, so we too cannot calculate everything beforehand and must depend to a large extent on what comes along. Like them we are not left helpless, since our most important resources, like theirs, are discovered and derived from below. Like them we bring to Africa things which have been known to the world at large for centuries, streams from ancient Greece and beyond. Just as they set up systems of irrigating arid Africa which once set up should largely work themselves, so do we. Even the most luminous of analogies can be pressed too far. For all our indebtedness to the Hellenic world, we cannot agree with Pindar that water is the best of things; but there was never any better brew made without it; and so we too serve our turn.



## CURRENT RESEARCHES IN AFRICAN ETHNOLOGY AND LINGUISTICS

### UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

#### *Survey of Non-European Rural Area—Keiskama Hoek, King William's Town, Cape Province*

AN extensive survey of Keiskama Hoek is being carried out under the directorship of Professor R. L. Robb. Geological, topographical, and ecological surveys, have been completed by Professor Mountain and Mr. Harcourt Wood of Rhodes University College, assisted by their staffs and students, and maps are being prepared with the aid of aerial photographs. The work includes a vegetation survey, a soil survey, nutrition and medical surveys, in which assistance is being given by the Department of Health and the Superintendent of St. Matthew's Mission Hospital; economic and educational studies, and an entomological survey. Professor Monica Wilson is directing the anthropological side of the investigation, and a report on social structure is being written up, after intensive field-work in one village; further field-work in other villages is to be undertaken; a report is also being prepared on Land Tenure. A geographical survey is being carried out by Professor Rennie, Rhodes University, and a report of the history of the district is being prepared. St. Matthew's Mission School and Farm have been made available for land use and agricultural research.

#### *Non-European Urban Area—Atteridgeville Native Location*

Dr. W. M. M. Eiselen, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Pretoria, is directing a study of a native location near Pretoria. He is being assisted by students of the University and a number of non-European teachers of schools in the area.

The two projects described above are being carried out under the auspices of the National Council for Social Research on behalf of the Union Department of Native Affairs. A number of universities, Government departments, and other organizations are co-operating.

#### *Linguistic Studies: University of Stellenbosch*

The following linguistic researches are in progress at the Department of Bantu Studies:

Prof. B. I. C. van Eeden—Phonetics and Grammar of Zulu.

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Mr. A. P. Kriel—Derivative Verb in Nyanja.

Mr. S. B. van der Westhuizen—Function and uses of the tenses in the indicative mood in Zulu.

Mr. D. P. J. van Zyl—Phonology and Grammar of Swazi.

## EAST AFRICA

*Tanganyika*

Mr. H. Cory, Government anthropologist, has been engaged during the past two years on the recording and unification of Sukuma Customary Law, and on a study of Sukuma tribal structure with a view to formulating proposals for popular representation.

*Protectorate of Zanzibar*

Professor Batson, Director of the School of Social Science and Social Administration, University of Cape Town, has been directing a sociological survey carried out in the Protectorate of Zanzibar during 1948-9; the subject of study being economic conditions with special reference to standards of living and tendencies to urbanization. Mrs. H. M. Batson acted as Field Supervisor, Mr. V. G. Pons and Mr. G. A. Petersen of Cape Town University took part in the Survey as Assistant Field Supervisors, and the survey staff included 24 Arab and African field investigators, of whom 6 were officers seconded from the District Administration; 17 were teachers in training from the Government teachers' training school. The work was carried out under the auspices of the Zanzibar Government, and was financed to the extent of 95 per cent. of the cost from Colonial Development and Welfare Funds. Results are now being worked out by Professor Batson and his staff in Cape Town.

*Uganda*

Dr. K. P. Wachsmann is engaged on a survey of local folk music and such other research as is required, in connexion with the Music Research Scheme sponsored by the Uganda museum and financed by a grant from Colonial Development and Welfare Funds.

## BRITISH WEST AFRICA

*Sierra Leone*

*An economic survey* of Sierra Leone has been carried out during 1949 by Mr. H. Childs of the Colonial Administrative Service, with a view to indicating measures necessary to effect an increase in economic production during the next four or five years.

*A soil conservation and land utilization survey* is being carried out under the auspices of the Sierra Leone Government by a team working under the direction of the District Commissioner, Mr. E. A. Waldock, and including an agricultural officer and the assistant conservator of forests. The field of study is the whole Protectorate and the aim of the survey is to secure efficient land use and soil conservation, with due regard for local land tenure and native custom.

*A socio-economic survey of rural areas of the colony* is being conducted by Mr. G. R. Collins, a geographer, and Miss E. M. Richardson who had previously been collecting sociological and nutritional data in the Gambia. The survey is concerned particularly with depressed economic conditions in certain rural areas, including their social effects, and is being conducted under the auspices of the British Colonial Office (Colonial Development and Welfare Fund).



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*Nigeria*

Mr. F. W. de St. Croix is carrying out linguistic researches in Northern Nigeria, particularly into the Fulani languages. The research is sponsored by the British Colonial Office (Colonial Development and Welfare Fund).

## AFRIQUE FRANÇAISE

*Afrique du Nord*

M. et Mme Champaux ont effectué dans la région de l'oasis de Tabelbala (Sahara algéro-marocain) une mission de plusieurs mois consacrée à la préhistoire et à l'ethnographie en insistant sur la persistance dans la culture locale d'éléments noirs anciens.

*Afrique Occidentale Française*

Mlle D. Bouche a dépouillé les archives des principaux centres d'A.O.F. en vue d'une étude sur ' les villages de liberté '. M. Dresch (Professeur de Géographie à la Sorbonne) a longuement travaillé en Casamance, en Côte d'Ivoire, au Soudan et en Guinée Portugaise, sur des problèmes actuels de géographie humaine.

Le R.P. Gilles de Pelichy a étudié l'organisation socialo-religieuse des Sénoufo.

M. Mauny (IFAN) a étudié la préhistoire de l'Aouker; il a découvert à Kédama des terrasses lacustres et des industries du paléolithique, à Akreijit et au Tarf Frékiké, des fragments d'hommes sub-fossiles du plus haut intérêt.

M. Paul Mercier (détaché par l'ORSC à l'IFAN) a poursuivi son étude de l'organisation et de l'importance des clans chez les Somba de l'Atakora (Dahomey).

M. J. Poujade a continué son enquête sur les techniques navales de construction en Casamance et en Guinée Portugaise et a entrepris, dans la région du Niel, des recherches extensives sur le même sujet.

Sœur Marie André du Sacré Cœur a entrepris une mission subventionnée par l'Office de la Recherche Scientifique Outre-mer, au Soudan, en Haute Volta et au Dahomey, pour y poursuivre ses recherches sur la situation de la femme en Afrique Occidentale Française.

M. Darot, qui a effectué une enquête d'information scientifique en pays Éwe à la demande du Gouvernement, est actuellement en cours de mettre en œuvre la documentation recueillie sur les langues et les littératures des populations du Sud-Togo.

*Cameroun Français*

Répertoire sonore des langues d'Afrique Noire (voir *Notes and News*, pp. 74-5) sous l'égide d'IFAN Cameroun; étude sociologique de la zone urbaine du Cameroun français (M. J. P. Nicolas); carte ethnologique et répertoire des peuples Nord-Cameroun (M. J. Mouchet) sous l'égide du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique avec la collaboration d'IFAN.

*Afrique Équatoriale Française*

M. Jean-Paul Lebeuf (CNRS) et Mme Annie Masson Detourbet (Mission Logone-lac Fitri) ont poursuivi, dans le Territoire du Tchad et le Nord-Cameroun, l'étude systématique des restes des anciennes populations sao. Les fouilles archéologiques

ont livré des statuettes d'un style inconnu qui constitue un aspect nouveau de l'art des Noirs et ont permis de déceler un apport oriental postérieur aux premiers établissements. Ces recherches furent accompagnées d'enquêtes ethnographiques et démographiques chez les Kotoko, descendants des premiers habitants de la région (voir *Africa*, xix, 3, p. 238).

Le Dr. Pelage, au cours d'un long séjour dans le Cameroun méridional, a étudié l'application des nouvelles méthodes de sélection et d'orientation professionnelle en vue de la participation des autochtones dans les plans de développement technique des territoires de la France d'Outre-mer. Il a choisi comme principal objet d'étude les Bamiléké qui constituent une des populations les plus actives et les plus entreprenantes du Cameroun.

M. et Mme Pepper ont continué leurs importantes recherches sur les langages tambourinés du Cameroun méridional et du Haut-Oubangui, et M. Pepper a pu déterminer les règles qui permettent la traduction de ce langage; ils ont effectué de nombreux enregistrements sur disques de rythmes et de chants, et ils ont constitué une collection d'instruments de musique.

MM. Sautter et Balandier, chargés par le Haut Commissaire d'une mission d'information scientifique en pays Fang, ont effectué une étude de la structure sociale, du mouvement de regroupement des clans, de la démographie, de la vie économique. Pendant l'été 1949 ils ont dépouillé des archives du Moyen Congo et M. Balandier a entrepris une étude psychologique des élèves de l'École des cadres supérieurs.

Des enquêtes géographique et sociologique des principales cités indigènes d'Afrique Équatoriale Française, et une enquête sur les niveaux de vie dans la vallée du Niari sont en préparation.

#### PORTUGUESE AFRICA

The researches of Professor A. de Almeida are being continued under the auspices of the Escola Superior Colonial of Lisbon (see *Africa*, xix, 3, p. 238). Professor de Almeida has carried out ethnological, linguistic, and archaeological investigations among the Bantu peoples of south-west Angola.



## Notes and News

### *Africa—Lowdermilk Project*

IN view of the very serious situation resulting from the deterioration and destruction of land in Africa, largely owing to unskilful use of natural resources by native cultivators, the Agricultural Missions, Inc., of New York, in co-operation with the Secretary of State for Colonies in H.M. Government, and with British and American Missionary Societies in Africa, has arranged to make available for study and consultation the services of Dr. Walter C. Lowdermilk. Dr. Lowdermilk possesses exceptional qualifications in the fields of forestry and land use and conservation and has had wide experience in the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (of which he was Assistant Chief from 1933-47) and in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He has also acted as consultant for the French Government in North Africa and as adviser on soil conservation to the Chinese Government.

Dr. Lowdermilk is now in Africa and is proposing to visit Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, Nigeria, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland. He will consult with all those concerned, both official and unofficial bodies, as to methods of promoting, on the part of the African, an increased sense of responsibility for the wise use of his land; he will also be available, as may be requested, to Government agencies in a technical capacity, to carry out field studies, conferences, meetings for Africans, and such other activities as may be required in the different areas concerned.

### *Gift for Natal University*

AN anonymous European donor has offered £100,000 to endow a chair of African (Bantu) studies at the University of Natal, to establish a library and museum, and provide for their maintenance. The offer, which is subject to certain conditions regarding a grant of land by the Durban municipality, will enable the University to plan the establishment of a major school or institute of African studies.

### *East Africa Inter-territorial Languages (Swahili) Committee*

THE Committee's report on its activities for 1948 describes the reorganization consequent on its transfer to the authority of the East Africa High Commission. The Committee has been reduced from twenty-two to nine members, and will in future consist of persons expert in Swahili and kindred Bantu languages; it will act as the sole authority for Swahili for the purposes of literary publication. The staff of full-time readers at head-office has been increased and an additional reader has been appointed in England, to facilitate speedy production. Work has continued on the revision of the new standard Swahili-English and English-Swahili dictionaries, and on the production of an abridged edition. The organization of the Swahili Essay Competition and the Authorship Competition has been handed over to the East African Literature Bureau, but the adjudication of awards is still vested in the Committee. Satisfaction is recorded at the improvement in the general standard reached in the Essay competition. Contacts have been made with those interested in the co-ordination of Swahili outside the East African dependencies, for example in the Belgian Congo.

### *Sound Recording of African Languages*

A LINGUISTIC project on a large scale is in preparation under the direction of IFAN Cameroun, with the assistance of the Office de la Recherche Scientifique Outre-mer and

the Centre National des Recherches. It is proposed to make systematic sound recordings of African languages, starting in the first instance with the languages of Cameroun français, and it is hoped by this means to secure phonetic material which will be of use to this Institute in connexion with the Handbook of African Languages on which work is now in progress. The material recorded will be based on certain questionnaires formulated by Dr. Tucker of the School of Oriental and African Studies. M. Nicolas, Directeur of IFAN Cameroun, has addressed a memorandum to the International African Institute describing the aims and scope of the project, the techniques and methods to be employed, and the procedure for presenting results. He suggests that similar enterprises might be undertaken by other organizations in other areas of Africa and the results collated.

### *Gramophone Records of African Music*

THE Musée de l'Homme, Paris, has assembled a collection of records of African music prepared by M. C. Rouget, of the Département d'Éthnologie musicale, in collaboration with the Office de la Recherche Scientifique d'Outre-mer. The records comprise a selection of those made by M. A. Didier, of the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, during his expedition to the Congo area in 1946, and include examples of the music of twenty-three native peoples in the Lower Congo, Gabon, Oubangui-Chari, and of two pygmy tribes of the Lower Congo—in all 103 recordings representative of all types of African music: instrumental, both solo and orchestral, as well as vocal and choral specimens both with and without instrumental accompaniment. Certain ceremonial performances of the pygmies have been recorded in their entirety; one of these, which occupies eight records, reveals very clearly the architectural quality of this music, the motive of which is participation in a magical and religious cult.

All the recordings were made in the field and out-of-doors, but they are not inferior in quality to studio recordings and the characteristic tone quality of African music has been faithfully reproduced. The name and geographical location of the people concerned, as well as the instrumental or vocal character of the music, is indicated on each record.

The complete set of thirty-four records is available for sale at 15,000 francs (exclusive of packing and postage): only fifty sets have been made, and no records will be sold separately. Orders should be addressed to: Département d'Éthnologie musicale, Musée de l'Homme, Palais de Chaillot, Paris.

### *Organisme d'enquête pour l'étude anthropologique des populations indigènes de l'A.O.F.*

AN account of the 'Mission Anthropologique' which has been at work from January 1946 to August 1948 in French West Africa, has been published by its director, Médecin Lt.-Colonel Léon Pales. The mission made a comprehensive study of the native populations of French West Africa, mainly from the point of view of nutrition and health. Within the range of its inquiries it included anthropometric, physiological, and biochemical studies, as well as psychological, pathological, and ethnological researches, and detailed analyses of food consumption and production, including nutritive values, preparation and conservation of food-stuffs.

The work of the mission was carried out in part by laboratory and documentary work, in part by tours in the field. Four separate tours were undertaken in Sénégal, Soudan occidental, Guinée occidentale, and Haute Volta—Côte d'Ivoire—Fouta Djallon. A great number of families and individuals, including school children and hospital patients, were examined, and reports on special aspects or particular sections of the work were published during the course of the investigation. Some of these have already been noticed in this *Journal* (xviii, 2 and 3, 1948).



The mission was regarded initially as a 'pilot project', and, in the words of the director, 'Elle a conduit sa barque'; its further activities, however, are uncertain and its continuance is threatened by lack of a permanent location and adequate equipment.

### *Corona*

A MONTHLY journal, primarily designed for members of the British Colonial Service, was started in February 1949 under the editorship of Kenneth Bradley, a member of the Colonial Service, who has served in Northern Rhodesia, Falkland Islands, and Gold Coast. *Corona* includes articles of general interest to all concerned with colonial administration, as well as book reviews, notes on current affairs in the United Kingdom, and comments and information on social diversions likely to appeal to officers on leave. Shorter articles and verses from time to time illuminate the lighter side of life in colonial territories, and a specially attractive feature of each number are the extremely beautiful and well-chosen photographs illustrating characteristic aspects of various territories. The October number (vol. 1, 9) includes an article on the Portuguese African Colonies, initiating a series dealing with the colonial dependencies of different nations. *Corona* may be ordered from H.M. Stationery Office, P.O. Box 569, London, S.E. 1. Annual subscription 14s. including postage.

### *Margaret Wrong Prize*

READERS of this *Journal* will not need to be reminded of the outstanding work which Margaret Wrong did for the spiritual and cultural development of Africa, to which she devoted the last twenty years of her life. She was particularly concerned, as Secretary of the International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa, in the provision of books to satisfy the demands of the rapidly growing literate public in that continent.

It was felt that many of her friends in Africa and elsewhere would like to perpetuate her memory by the institution of a Prize intended to encourage literary production by Africans. A Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Sir Gerald Hawkesworth to organize an appeal for funds and to initiate arrangements for awarding the Prize. After the tragic death of the Chairman his place was taken by Mr. Christopher Cox, Educational Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The fund is still open and any person or institution desiring to be associated with this project is invited to send a contribution to: THE MARGARET WRONG MEMORIAL FUND, c/o The Rev. Michael Davidson, M.A., Institute of Christian Education, 46 Gordon Square, London, W.C.

It is proposed to offer a Prize annually for original literary work by writers of African race resident in a part of Africa to be determined each year by the Trustees of the Fund. The Prize will be open to competition in 1950 subject to the following regulations:

1. A silver medal and a prize not exceeding £5 will be offered in 1950.
2. Manuscripts are invited from the Southern Sudan, Somaliland, Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, and the Belgian Congo.
3. Manuscripts should not be less than 5,000 or more than 15,000 words in length, and may be written in either English or French.
4. Works submitted should be of an imaginative character or descriptive of African life or thought, and suitable for general reading.
5. Manuscripts should be addressed to: THE MARGARET WRONG PRIZE, c/o The International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa, 2 Eaton Gate, London, S.W. 1, and must be received not later than 31 December 1950.
6. The decision of the Trustees will be final.

## Reviews of Books

*Xhosa Law of Persons.* By J. VAN TROMP. Juta & Co., Ltd., Cape Town and Johannesburg, 1948. Pp. xii+178. 30s.

THE student of African native law is, in general, handicapped by the scantiness of the literary sources available to him. In respect of South Africa, however, the deficiency is less seriously felt; for there exists, in the various series of law reports, a considerable body of material in the form of decisions based on Native law, which have been systematically collected over a period of many years. (A detailed list is to be found in J. Lewin's bibliography in *Bantu Studies*, vol. xv, No. 2, June, 1941.)

There is thus a nucleus of recorded case-law available for purposes of text-book writing; and in the present work, which was written in 1941 as a thesis for the degree of LL.D. in the University of Stellenbosch, the author makes full use of this material, as well as of the work of previous text-book writers (particularly Whitfield).

It must not be thought, however, that Dr. Van Tromp is any great respecter of the authority of the superior courts (even of the Native Appeal Courts) in matters of Native law. Indeed, one of the most noticeable features of this book is the freedom with which he criticizes the rulings of these courts. Professional lawyer as he is, there is nothing tamely orthodox about his condemnation of the 'ill-considered application of western ideas and principles of Roman-Dutch law, and the submissive attitude of the inferior towards the superior courts under the existing system of precedence' (p. 161).

A few examples will serve to illustrate Dr. Van Tromp's readiness to challenge the rulings of the courts. When cattle had been handed over during the period of betrothal, as payment of *ikhazi* in advance, and the marriage (after being duly celebrated) was subsequently dissolved, it was held that only the original number of cattle should be returned; this, according to Dr. Van Tromp, was an erroneous decision, for in such a case the natural increase counts as part of the *ikhazi* and is recoverable on divorce, in addition to the original number of beasts (p. 61).

On the other hand, the Native Appeal Court has held that the fine paid by a young man who has carried off a girl under the custom of *ukuthwala* 'becomes merged into the dowry and is recoverable on the dissolution of the marriage as dowry'. Dr. Van Tromp maintains the contrary, and says that 'in Xhosa law a fine never merges into the *ikhazi*' (p. 66).

A question of fundamental importance, as to which Dr. Van Tromp considers the courts to be in error, is whether it is possible for a marriage to be validly dissolved without any repayment of *ikhazi*. Thus the Native Appeal Court has held that gross ill treatment of a wife is a ground for dissolution of marriage, and that in such a case the husband is liable to forfeit the whole of the *ikhazi*. Dr. Van Tromp contends that unless there is at least a partial repayment there can be no dissolution of the marriage (pp. 155-6 and 167-8).

In thus advancing his own dogmatic formulations of Xhosa law in opposition to those propounded by the courts, Dr. Van Tromp is laying claim to superior knowledge, and the question will naturally be raised: What are his sources of information? Though he frequently cites Soga's works and the Report of the Commission on Native Laws and Customs, 1883, he seems to rely largely on his own independent investigations, carried out during a period of over eighteen months which he spent 'in close contact with the amaXhosa, endeavouring to see and understand their laws, mode of life and social institutions as these are seen and understood by the amaXhosa themselves'. He acknowledges, in the Preface, his indebtedness to 'all those Chiefs, headmen and hundreds of Xhosa men and women, old and



young, who willingly assisted me to accumulate the mass of information upon which this work is based'. Special mention is made of 'many old Native men well versed in Native Law'. As no reference is made to any special technique of investigation it is to be presumed that the principal method employed was that of interrogation and discussion.

Dr. Van Tromp's avowed aim is 'to reproduce Xhosa legal principles . . . untainted by ideas and conceptions peculiar to Roman-Dutch Law or English Law'. Perhaps, as a result of undue concentration on this objective, he shows a certain lack of sympathy with the organic conception of Native law, and a disinclination to recognize the processes whereby it is being adapted to the changing conditions of modern African society. Still less does he approve of the action of the courts in seeking to override or modify Native law at certain points on the ground of its alleged repugnancy to natural justice, morality, or public policy. Thus he deplores the rulings which have been given as to the nullity of forced marriages (pp. 73-5) and the capacity of a widow to hold in her personal right any property which she may acquire after her husband's death (pp. 127-9). Commenting on this latter ruling, Dr. Van Tromp writes, with perhaps a trace of exasperation:

'The Court actually recognises the independent status of a female, something that was never and is even now not recognised by Xhosa law, because it is against the whole spirit of Xhosa Family Law, and the only result is a keenly felt disregard of the legal principles by the Court, which, they consider, often result in a miscarriage of justice.'

Appreciation of Dr. Van Tromp's work will no doubt vary to some extent according to the views which different readers may themselves hold on these disputed matters. But, despite its controversial flavour, the book will be welcomed as a useful addition to the literature of African law and as an indication of the advantages of selecting for specialized study a particular branch of law in a homogeneous tribal group.

The customary law of the Xhosa-speaking peoples of the Cape Province of South Africa is marked by a number of distinctive features; for example, the custom of the levirate, which is so widely accepted in Africa and elsewhere, is described as 'anathema to the amaXhosa'. In his exposition of Xhosa family law, Dr. Van Tromp has much to say that is interesting and suggestive from the wider viewpoint of the comparative study of African law. In this connexion, one final reference must suffice. At a certain stage in the ceremonies associated with a Xhosa marriage, the bride is required to take a few sips from a calabash of milk, and, whereas other observances which form part of the traditional sequence may, if necessary, be dispensed with, this particular act of milk-drinking is, according to Dr. Van Tromp, essential to the contracting of a legally valid marriage (pp. 56-7 and 77-80). This purports to be an addition to the list of essential requirements which has been accepted by the Native Appeal Court, viz. (i) consent of the contracting parties, (ii) payment of (or promise to pay) dowry, and (iii) delivery of the bride. The emphasis placed by Dr. Van Tromp on the necessity for performance of a ritual act of this kind, not merely as one stage in the traditional ceremonial accompaniments of marriage, but as decisively marking the point at which the contract becomes binding, and as an essential condition of the legal validity of the marriage, is paralleled by the findings of investigators in other parts of Africa. Ritual acts, apparently possessing a similar legal significance, are reported, for example, among the Nuer by Evans-Pritchard, among the Bahima by Oberg, and among the tribes of the Belgian Congo by Sohier.

ARTHUR PHILLIPS

*Man and his Works, The Science of Cultural Anthropology.* By MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1948. Pp. xviii+678; bibliogr. \$5.

PROFESSOR HERSKOVITS' book stands half-way between a text-book and a theoretical treatise. In the author's own words, it 'strives to give the student a grasp of the phenomenon we call culture, . . . to afford him a sense of the range of variety in which it manifests

itself', as well as to develop the author's 'own view and advance hypotheses to answer certain problems in the study of culture'. This double aim can but enhance the value of the book; for if by a text-book we mean the presentation and summary of existing knowledge in any field of science, it will gain in authority if it also explicitly states the theoretical premisses underlying the presentation. The premisses in the present case are already expressed in the passage just quoted. Professor Herskovits reviews the field of anthropological knowledge from a sharply defined theoretical standpoint, namely, that of *culture*. Culture, he holds, 'is the man-made part of man's environment', surviving beyond his physical life, and linking his lifespan with the past through being transmitted from generation to generation (pp. 17 ff.) Expressed differently, culture is the 'learned' portion of human behaviour, and hence the 'way of life of a people', which is separable from that ordered living-together which makes a human aggregate a 'people' or 'society' (p. 29). Animals, Herskovits argues, have this ordered living-together, that is, 'society', but no culture; more precisely, they achieve their society by means other than culture. Culture, therefore, is something super-added to social existence, yet also a mechanism whereby human social existence is enabled to operate and maintain itself in its peculiar fashion. Viewed genetically, this mechanism is visible in the continuous process of 'enculturation', whereby the individual is brought to embrace the given way of life (pp. 40-1). But though culture makes human society possible, it in turn seems to depend on the particular form the latter takes; for we are also told (p. 30) that the study of 'society' (as against 'culture') is important in that it shows the effects of social aggregations upon behaviour (i.e. culture). So that we have something in the nature of a circular process linking 'culture' and 'society'.

I will not pursue the problem of this, I believe, inescapable dichotomy. Herskovits has stated it and exposed some of its inherent difficulties, though his formulation is possibly not final. Nor is it relevant for the body of the book. For there *culture* alone is the basic concept, and we may well call the book an exploration of the universe of human activity in so far as it is susceptible to this conceptual tool. It may have its limits; but Herskovits speaks with the authority of a fieldworker and teacher of wide experience, so that other anthropologists, whatever their interests or methodological premisses, cannot now by-pass *Man and his Works*.

Much in this generously planned book falls outside the framework of a journal devoted to Africa, but much reminds us forcibly of the author's Africanist background. The majority of American anthropologists base themselves primarily on the experience of small communities in America or the Pacific, often artificially kept alive and possessing only a truncated culture. The experience behind *Man and his Works* is that of the large and complex societies of Africa, and of cultures virile and fully active, which preserve their vitality even when transplanted to the new, American, habitat. It might be said almost that many chapters could not have been written save by a scholar thinking, as it were, in African terms. The discussion of a full money economy and of that rarely mentioned aspect of economics, the relationship between production and the cost of government, rests essentially on African material. So does the study of 'institutionalized friendship'. In the field of political institutions African tribes exhibit forms of organization and 'betray a political acumen' which 'both from the point of view of organization and administration . . . equals, where it does not surpass, anything known in the non-literate world' (p. 332). Equally, the most widely contrasted forms of political systems can be surveyed as they exist side by side in Africa, and the comparative account of such societies as the Ashanti at one, and the Nuer at the other end of the scale, contributes greatly to the didactic value of Herskovits' book. In the chapters on religion, African practices once more offer relevant aspects for comparison—such as the highly technical character of Azande magic and witchcraft, the elaborate theology of Dahomey, or the prayers to ancestors elsewhere in Africa.

In the discussion of culture change and contact, especially, the African field provides,



not only instructive instances, but typical problems against which the whole method of inquiry must be tested. Thus Herskovits discusses and criticises Malinowski's 'zero-point' theory, which was evolved from the examination of African-European contacts. Herskovits concludes that the zero-point conception, leading as it does to an essentially 'a-historical approach', made it difficult for Malinowski and his followers 'to place change in Africa in its proper perspective, as only one phase of the age-long process in human experience of cultural transmission' (p. 528). I would suggest that the 'a-historical' viewpoint derives some justification from the lack of reliable historical data and may well be regarded as a safeguard against mere speculation and *soi-disant* history. Furthermore, it is a methodological device implying a self-limitation of interest, such as all scientific inquiries legitimately employ. But no one, least of all the Africanist, will dispute this conclusion—'In summary, then, the search for "pure" cultures, uncontaminated by outer contact, has been almost entirely given over, while the hypothetical nature of reconstructions of unrecorded history has come to be clearly understood as an exercise in probability' (p. 541).

It is inevitable that a book of this scope should sacrifice the exhaustive treatment of any one aspect of culture to its over-all comprehensiveness, and it might be argued that particular problems had not received the emphasis or space they deserve. In particular the account of Law is compressed into the last two pages of the chapter on Political Systems; and only a very slight treatment is accorded to one type of primitive religion, familiar especially to the Africanist, namely, ancestor cult, more precisely, that type of religion which operates through and is absorbed in kinship structure. Nor, finally, does the analysis of kinship and lineage structure seem sufficiently full or precise. Perhaps, indeed, this shortcoming exemplifies the limits of an exclusively culture-oriented approach.

But if Herskovits' account does not invariably do justice to the diverse aspects of social life, this review can certainly not do justice to the ambitious scope of the account. Some of us may feel that it is too ambitious for our present state of knowledge and methodological precision, and that greater selectiveness or concentration would have better served the cause of anthropology. However this may be, the attempt itself will command the respect of all anthropologists, and its remarkably successful achievement their admiration.

S. F. NADEL

*Ashanti-Vægtlodder (Ashanti Weights)*. By CARL KJERSMEIER. Jul. Gjellerups Forlag. Copenhagen, 1948. 8s. 9d. Obtainable from Kegan Paul.

*Ashanti Weights* by Carl Kjersmeier, the well-known writer on African Art, with reproductions of one hundred gold weights from the author's collection and text in Danish and English, is a most welcome little book, for, apart from Rudolf Zeller's ethnological study *Die Goldgewichte von Asante* and a chapter by R. S. Rattray in *Ashanti*, nothing has been published on this highly interesting branch of the art of the Akan.

The weights, fascinating little objects in metal, used in the Gold Coast till 1896 for weighing gold dust, up to that date the currency of the country, can be divided roughly into five categories: weights decorated with ornamental designs; weights in the shape of triangles, squares, pyramids, &c.; weights depicting animals, of which many had originally a symbolic meaning (like the fishes, crocodiles, scorpions); weights depicting people in action, often illustrating a proverb; and weights in the form of a variety of objects such as stools, sandals, pipes, fans, &c., or in the form of a shell, the seed of a fruit, a beetle, or claw of a crab, of which the latter items were often cast directly from life. A representative selection from each of these sections can be found in Dr. Kjersmeier's valuable little book, illustrating well the ability and skill of the Ashanti artist.

The text is based largely on the research of Zeller and Rattray, but recently I have been able to get further information on this subject.

According to the tradition of the Bono-Takyiman, like the Ashanti a branch of the Akan, the gold currency and the whole apparatus connected with it—state treasury, gold weights, scales, shovels, spoons, gold-dust boxes, &c., were introduced into the Bono kingdom by Obunemankoma in the latter half of the fourteenth century. Obunemankoma, when still a prince, was sent out when gold was discovered in Bono (and probably also to the region south of it later known as Ashanti), to invite the traders from the Sudan to come to Bono-Mansu, capital of Bono (a town situated about 100 miles north of Kumasi and now in ruins). It is said that Obunemankoma travelled for this purpose as far as the white man's country, which may have been Egypt or Tripoli then in the hands of the Seldjukian Turks. Unfortunately it is not recorded where he was taught the system of weights which, according to Thomassey,<sup>1</sup> is Indian in origin and based on the *kokwa* (0.14 gm.) which, like the Retti in ancient India, was the weight of the seed of the *abrus precatorius*.

When Obunemankoma visited the Sudan it was part of the empire of Mali where the Arabic system of weights was in use for the gold trade. There may still have been, however, places where the older Indian system, introduced probably by the Rhadanite Jews from Rhaga in Persia,<sup>2</sup> was still employed, particularly in those regions where the people were not yet converted to Islam.<sup>3</sup> Since no weights similar to the so-called Ashanti weights, have been found in the Sudan, one must assume that the form and decoration of the weights was Bono in origin. As a matter of fact the Bono-Takyiman tradition records that when Obunemankoma became third king of Bono, he ordered all the weights of the royal treasury to be marked with designs symbolic of the king and queen-mother or to be made in the form of royal symbols. Citizens were allowed to choose designs for themselves and generally chose something which they believed particularly characteristic of themselves. But their weights had to be approved by the royal treasury, not only from the point of view of design but also with regard to the correctness of the weight.

After the conquest of the Bono kingdom by the Ashanti, in about 1740, the gold trade passed into the hands of Ashanti, and the gold currency and its apparatus were introduced into that country, which up to then had adhered to an iron currency. It appears, however, that none of the strict laws of Bono, which made for honesty, were taken over by the conquerors. Also weights, formerly used solely by the royal treasury, or privately by the kings and queen-mothers, could now be owned by commoners.

EVA L. R. MEYEROWITZ

*La Cité indigène de Léopoldville.* Par EMMANUEL CAPELLE, Édition C.E.S.I. et C.E.P.S.I., Léopoldville et Élisabethville. 1947. Pp. 108. Illus.

ON sait que Léopoldville (anciennement Kintambo) est depuis 1923 la capitale du Congo belge. Située sur la rive sud du Stanley pool, en face de Brazzaville, elle commande l'immense réseau navigable du fleuve Congo et raccorde celui-ci à l'Océan Atlantique par la ligne du chemin de fer du Bas-Congo. Elle comprend une cité européenne qui se décompose en Léo-Ouest, Kalina, Léo-Est (Kinshasa) et Ndolo, situés en bordure du Pool de l'ouest à

<sup>1</sup> M. P. Thomassey, *Autour des Poids d'Or Ashanti-Baoule*. A Lecture given at the International West African Conference at Dakar in 1947.

<sup>2</sup> The Rhadanite Jews travelled widely and regularly through Europe, parts of Africa and the East during the eighth and ninth centuries A.D., introducing everywhere the Indian numerals, decimal system, and the use of zero. They no doubt visited also the Ghana kingdom in the Sudan which is believed to have been founded by Cyrenaican Jews in the third

century A.D. and was at that time at its height and famous for its gold trade.

<sup>3</sup> One such kingdom was the Kumbu kingdom, founded by Akan, to the south of Mali proper. Both the Kumbu people, as well as the Bono, came originally from Dja (or Dia in the Djénne region). Obunemankoma may have only re-established the old gold currency and its apparatus which, as long as Bono had no gold, had to be given up.



l'est — et d'une cité indigène, située au sud de la première. C'est à cette cité indigène qu'est consacré le livre sous revue.

Elle couvre une surface de mille hectares qui se divise géographiquement en trois blocs : l'ancienne cité, la nouvelle cité et celle moins importante de Léo-Ouest. Administrativement, elle forme un tout bien organisé, fonctionnant sous l'autorité d'un fonctionnaire européen, assisté par un chef et un chef-adjoint de cité, des chefs de quartier et un conseil, tous indigènes.

La cité indigène est de formation récente. Son organisation actuelle ne date que de 1945. Elle est en pleine voie de développement. Pour se faire une idée du rythme de ce développement, il suffit de se rappeler que sa population est montée de 16.700 en 1923 à 110.280 au 31 décembre 1946.

Cette population n'est pas ethniquement homogène. Elle est au contraire extrêmement mélangée. Elle provient en effet d'un vaste mouvement d'émigration des milieux ruraux vers les grands centres urbains, mouvement qu'il a fallu endiguer parce qu'il constitue une menace grave pour la masse des populations moins évoluées qui continuent à vivre sous le régime des coutumes, des institutions et des traditions tribales.

À l'intérieur de la cité indigène, les individus de même origine tribale ont tendance à se grouper. Ces groupes ethniques n'ont pas d'existence légale et les chefs qu'ils peuvent se donner ne sont pas officiellement reconnus. Ce qui n'empêche pas les autorités administratives de recourir à leurs avis et conseils quand l'occasion s'en présente.

On se représente aisément les problèmes difficiles et délicats que pose l'administration d'une telle cité.

Après avoir décrit la situation géographique peu favorable, exposé l'organisation politique et administrative, et analysé les statistiques démographiques, M. Capelle examine successivement les mesures de police et d'épuration — les lotissements de terrains, habitations et voirie — la vie économique et le ravitaillement — la main-d'œuvre — la situation sociale — les œuvres d'assistance sociale — l'hygiène — les impôts et taxes — les missions religieuses et les écoles — les juridictions indigènes — les perspectives d'avenir.

Sur tous ces problèmes graves et complexes qui embrassent la totalité de la vie de la cité, l'auteur fournit des renseignements exacts et précis, aussi complets que possible. Toute préoccupation de propagande lui reste étrangère. Dans un style simple, sobre et concis, il s'attache à exposer les faits, les situations et les problèmes sous leur jour réel. Jusque dans les critiques qu'il lui arrive d'émettre, il reste objectif et constructif.

Faut-il ajouter que ce bilan qui ne date que de 1947 paraît déjà vieilli et que ceux qui l'ont lu et qui sont désireux de suivre le rythme du développement de cette grande cité indigène de l'Afrique Centrale, appellent de leurs vœux la deuxième édition de cette monographie, comme ils souhaiteraient aussi la publication de monographies semblables consacrées à d'autres cités indigènes ou centres extra-coutumiers du Congo belge.

E. D.

*Islam in the Sudan.* By J. SPENCER TRIMINGHAM. London, Oxford University Press, 1949. Pp. x+280. 21s. net.

THIS is a survey of the living religion of the Islamic peoples of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and, as Islam is not only a religion in the narrow sense but also a distinctive way of life, no man can begin to know the Sudanese of the northern and central regions until he has realized the peculiar acceptance of Islam in its Sudanese setting.

Islam in the Sudan has received only fragmentary attention in the past, and chiefly in its Mahdist aspect, though recent workers in Egypt have been attracted to more general researches. This is the first attempt by a European student, who has the advantage of serving in the Sudan, to achieve a conspectus of the whole important field.

Partly because of their remoteness from the cultural centres of Islam, partly because the Sudan lies on both sides of the frontier between Islam and animism, the Sudanese have developed their own particular attitude to their religion. 'The Sudanese', Trimingham writes, 'received Islam whole-heartedly, but, through their unique capacity of assimilation, moulded it to their own particular mentality; escaping the formulae of theologians, they sang in it, danced in it, wept in it, brought their own customs, their own festivals into it, paganized it a good deal, but always kept the vivid reality of its inherent unity under the rule of one God'. Most vivid of all the qualities of Islam in the Sudan is the universal emphasis upon the element of mysticism.

The secular conflict between the dogmatic conception of religion (*sharī'a*) and its mystical interpretation (*taṣawwuf*) once rent the Sudan in twain and has political implications which exist to-day. The mystical element was supreme throughout the three centuries of the sultanate of Sennar when the land became the home of hundreds of colourful saints acceptable alike to sultans and their subjects. In this ṣūfist paradise the law was tribal and the canonists had no place.

The Egyptians, who occupied the Northern Sudan from 1821 to 1885, introduced an Ottoman-type of administration and set up a legal hierarchy of foreign canonists trained in the University of al-Azhar. These staffed the Islamic courts while the popular mystics, with one or two exceptions, were denied official countenance. So the people's saints went on their way in valley and desert where they were welcomed, fed, and respected, until one of them, Muḥammad Aḥmad al-Mahdī, with almost the whole country behind him, rose and ejected the Egyptian régime, *qāḍīs*, *muftīs*, and all.

Here we have a balanced, if not original, view of the Mahdist movement, together with what is certainly the best available summary of the history and tenets of the various religious brotherhoods which have so great a place in Islam in the Sudan. But the author is less than fair to the Egyptian-trained canonists who preceded the *mahdiyya*. The Egyptian government of the Sudan, whatever its shortcomings in other directions, brought the Sudanese step by step into the minor religious courts until, under the sympathetic administration of the governor-general Ja'far Pasha Maḥzar, Shaikh al-Amīn Muḥammad al-Darīr was appointed president of the professors of Islamic law in the Sudan. These Egyptian and Sudanese legists did much to foster the study and diffusion of literary Arabic, and the founders of the present Condominium rebuilt the legal structure on its former Egyptian foundations.

The later chapters of the book are highly controversial, treating of the impact of the West upon the Islamic way of life. Government policy as here interpreted will not always find official acceptance and no member of the *Ashiqqa*, the party of Nile Valley federation, will like being called a separatist. The concluding note on the press of the Sudan is already out of date for new journals come and go with amazing rapidity.

*Islam in the Sudan* well illustrates the technical difficulties besetting the Arabist in the Sudan where all manner of different transliterations and transcriptions of Arabic proper names prevail. Arabic place names, for instance, received their original Europeanized forms in days when explorers and administrators knew almost no Arabic and were in any case indifferent, if not deaf, to the refinements of sounds. But these quaint renderings have come to stay in the world's maps and the look of this book is not improved by the author's attempts to spell them rationally.

Trimingham's theme raises the question whether a Western reader, ignorant of the Arabic language and its systematic transliteration into Roman characters, can really understand the subject. When explaining Islam to a European public brought up in an altogether alien tradition it is hard to avoid deviating into the opposite extremes of scholastic pedantry or sensational journalism. Trimingham's endeavour has been to steer a middle course, and



he has succeeded, for in truth there is no short cut to a knowledge of one of the greatest of religions, no Islam for Junior Girls. What is more he has written a book which is an essential contribution to the understanding of a people waking out of sleep.

RICHARD HILL

*The Planting of Christianity in Africa.* By C. P. GROVES. Vol. I up to 1840. London: Lutterworth Press. 1948. Pp. 330. Maps. 21s. net.

THE author, who is Professor of Missions in the Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, is to be congratulated on achieving the apparently impossible task of compressing into a small volume the history of the Christian Church in Africa up to the year 1840. A second, and possibly a third volume, will be necessary to bring the story up to date. The whole of Africa is embraced and the Roman Catholic as well as the non-Roman branches of the Church. An immense amount of reading lies behind the skilful composition of this book. The method of presentation is chronological rather than regional, that is to say, the whole story is carried forward stage by stage rather than dealing completely with one region at a time. The book opens with descriptions of the physical features of the continent, so far as these affect the history, and of the African peoples—the latter being particularly well done. The style is simple and straightforward, and the historical account is enlivened by characterizations of the great personalities, in drawing which Mr. Groves shows a happy gift.

Christianity entered Africa at an early date in the north; and Professor Groves traces its troubled history in Egypt and along the Nile, and then in northern Africa. Egyptian Christianity had a distinctive character; indeed, it may be said that a sort of national religion was created by grafting elements of Christianity on to remnants of the old faith. There follows the story of how Islam overwhelmed and destroyed the Church, except in Egypt, where the Copts have resisted to this day, and in Abyssinia. Mr. Groves faces the question, Why could the Church not resist Islam in the Roman provinces? He points to the devastation caused by the Vandal wars and the consequent flight of so many Roman Christians which weakened the Church, already also exposed to Arian persecutions; but the chief reason was that the Church was never indigenous; its adherents were Roman colonists and romanized Berbers and the tribal Berbers were never brought in. 'The African Church, once the home of Tertullian, of Cyprian, and of Augustine, came to an end because the only peoples it had really won were swept away. And so the sad fact confronts us that North Africa is the land of the vanished Church.' The comparative failure of the Church in Egypt was largely due to neglect in providing an educated pastorate; the failure of some later missions was due to mass baptisms and the premature elevation of unfit Africans to the priesthood; and sometimes to the displacement of the vernacular by foreign tongues. Chapter 5 'The Ordeal with Islam, seventh and eighth centuries' and Chapter 6 'The Crescent across Africa, eighth to fifteenth centuries' are of very great interest. Mr. Groves is not content with tracing the course of Islamic advance through the Sudan and in East Africa: he inquires what were the factors facilitating its spread and what was the actual measure of its expansion and hold upon the people. He places first the activity of the Almoravides who were Berbers and says: 'It is one of the ironies of history that the very people whom the Church of North Africa failed to win to the Christian faith should have provided the agency by which the religion most resistant to Christianity was propagated.' Apart from valiant efforts by Franciscans and Dominicans to penetrate into Africa from the north, Christian enterprise ceased in the Middle Ages until the explorations of the Portuguese, promoted by Prince Henry, afforded the Church a second opportunity. The Prince was inspired with the ambition to outflank the Muslim power; his motives were political, scientific, commercial, but also religious; and Franciscans and Jesuits accompanied or

followed hard in the wake of the explorers to plant the Church in West and East Africa. In spite of their courage and devotion these attempts, says Professor Groves, 'had no permanent success'; and once again he seeks for the reasons of failure. 'Any expansion of Christianity due to its identification with a particular political régime is likely to be temporary only and to wane with the régime. It was so in these Portuguese territories; when Portuguese power faded, Christianity faded too.' Another factor was condonation by the Church, or by its representatives, of slavery and the slave-trade.

The seventeenth and part of the eighteenth century slipped by with the Christian enterprise in Africa all but dormant and the evil tentacles of the slave-trade so enveloping the continent that only the doughtiest champion could hope to set her free. Then came the great awakening in Britain, Europe, and the United States; a renewed Christian faith inspired the leadership that dealt a death-blow to the unholy traffic; and the same evangelical movement gave birth to the great Protestant missionary societies. Mr. Groves describes in Chapter 9 the 'Assault on slavery' and proceeds to relate the opening moves of the new Christian campaign in West and South Africa, Egypt, and Abyssinia. He closes his first volume in 1840, on the eve of the modern period that has seen a new Africa brought to birth. We feel that throughout our reading we are in the hands of one who has mastered his subject, drawing his knowledge not only from books but also from his thirteen years of service in Nigeria which have given him insight into the realities of the Christian mission.

EDWIN W. SMITH

*Headman's Enterprise: An Unexpected Page in Central African History.* By SAMUEL Y. NTARA. Translated from the Cewa and edited by CULLEN YOUNG. London: Lutterworth Press, 1949. Pp. 214. 7s. 6d. net.

MSYAMBOZA, the Cewa headman who is the subject of this biography by the author of *Man of Africa*, was born about 1830, shortly before the Ngoni Zulus crossed the Zambezi on their northward migration under Zwangendaba. He made his name by repelling an attack by a group of the same people on their southward thrust from Lake Tanganyika under Ciwere in the late fifties. At about the same time slavers from the coast appeared in his village with caravans of cloth and beads; but Msyamboza would only trade his captives for the guns which the traders carried for their own defence. Thus equipped, he became a successful hunter and trader of ivory; and, during the sixties and seventies, when the British blockade of the coast was steadily throttling the export of slaves by sea, Msyamboza, by trading his ivory to the Arabs at Kota Kota, acquired wealth in cloth and became a buyer instead of a seller of 'slaves', while his village of Cibanzi grew and prospered.

With his customary initiative he himself sought out the Scottish Free Church missionaries at Bandawe in the early eighties and was referred by them to the Dutch Reformed Mission at Kongwe, which speedily became the dominant factor in the economic and social as well as in the spiritual life of Msyamboza's village. Anyone who is familiar with the mission records of the Edwardian period will recognize in Mr. Ntara's narrative the reverse side of a familiar pattern. The same perception which had formerly enabled Msyamboza to distinguish between the guns and the glass beads, now showed him that a school was the indispensable means of keeping his village abreast of the times. The new fruits of the earth to which the missionaries introduced him were followed in due course by the fruits of the Gospel; and Msyamboza died in 1926 a baptized Christian and a firm supporter of the Government of Nyasaland.

Mr. Cullen Young in his introduction pertinently remarks that the picture of Msyamboza piloting his people through fifty years of social change 'does not wholly square with a prevalent theory that individualism, initiative and experimentation are impossible within



the early communal groups'. Yet there is little in the story of Msyamboza, as Mr. Ntara has adapted it from the accounts of the old men, that could not be paralleled a hundred times from the early travellers and from the consular and mission records of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is a fact worth remembering that the sociologist, apart from the natural bias imparted by his subject, has carried out the bulk of his observations during the industrial age, which, in Central Africa, Msyamboza hardly lived to see. And it is significant that we have here testimony from an African source that the early years of European contact, which are commonly supposed to have been the most disastrous because the least self-conscious, produced in many places the symptoms of a Renaissance rather than of a cancer.

ROLAND OLIVER

*A Vegetation-Types Map of Tanganyika Territory.* By CLEMENT GILLMAN. *The Geographical Review*, vol. xxxix, No. 1, 1949.

MR. CLEMENT GILLMAN died in 1946 while flying from Dar-es-Salaam to Moshi. Unhappily, therefore, the paper is the last of a distinguished group of publications from the pen of this eminent geographer and surveyor. It is a welcome and timely addition to the geographical literature on East Africa.

In 1940 an Inter-territorial Pasture Research Conference at Nairobi appointed a committee to draw up a classification of East African vegetation types, and Gillman was asked to prepare a vegetation map of Tanganyika. To this task he brought his unique experience of thirty-three years' service in the country during which he had kept detailed field notes of his many railway, hydrographic, and other surveys. The paper contains a statement on the difficulties of compiling the map, followed by a description of the eight main physiognomic vegetation types which were to be presented—(1) forest, (2) woodland, (3) bushland and thicket, (4) wooded grassland, (5) grassland, (6) permanent swamp vegetation, (7) desert and semi-desert, (8) vegetation actively induced by man. As the work progressed it became necessary to introduce two intermediate types, one between (1) and (2), the other between (2) and (3)/(4). Terms such as savanna, steppe, veld, miombo, and nyika, the application of which outside their areas of origin is of doubtful value, have been purposely avoided. The data were first plotted on a scale of 1:500,000, but on account of the reduction in scale of the published map to 1:2,000,000 it was necessary to omit a considerable amount of material gathered in the field. A relative reliability diagram indicates a high reliability for 56 per cent. of the country, a high figure when it is remembered that practically all the data were obtained solely by the ground surveys and reconnaissances of the author. Had the aerial photographs of the Colonial Survey's topographic mapping projects in Tanganyika been available it is probable that an even greater proportion of the map could have been prepared to that high standard. Twenty-four per cent. of the area is stated to be of medium reliability and 20 per cent. of low reliability.

In his field surveys the author recognized the existence over considerable areas of complexes of vegetation made up of repeated successions of two or more of the eight main types of vegetation, each type occupying areas far too small to be mapped individually on the final scale, the successions being associated with regularly repeated patterns of soil or geological distributions in areas over which the climate appears to be uniform, or, in the single case of the induced vegetation complex, with patterns of human occupation on certain of the grasslands. A special type of complex, in which the repeated succession of vegetation is related to the soil conditions determined by a constant repetition of relief over an area, and to which the author gives the name 'catenary complex', was also recognized. Eight complexes of the former type were investigated in the field but the scale of the final map permitted only two to be included. Three of the catenary complexes, including the Central

Plateau Catena which covers one-ninth of the country, are mapped. The value of the map is enhanced by the author's method of representing the catenary complexes. Instead of selecting a symbol or colour for each complex he devised pyjama-stripe patterns in which the broadest stripe represents the dominant vegetation type in the succession and the narrower stripes the less prominent types.

The paper ends with an account of the relationship between the distribution of vegetation and the physiography, and some notes on source materials and on comparisons with earlier vegetation maps of the territory. The paper is illustrated by thirty excellent photographs.

R. R. RAWSON

*A Grammar of Luvale.* By A. E. HORTON. Witwatersrand University Press, 1949. Pp. 221.

THIS work, which follows the arrangement and grammatical classification advocated by Professor C. M. Doke in his *Lamba Grammar* and other works, is the first comprehensive study of Luvale which has been published. It is reproduced from type-script by a photographic process, and the reproduction is excellent though the method has the draw-back that it does not allow for the use of different sizes of type for headings, &c.

Mr. Horton's book, conspicuous for its great wealth of illustrative sentences, is a sound and accurate exposition of the Luvale language, upon the accuracy of which the student of the language can rely with confidence, though there are certain points with which the reviewer is not entirely in agreement.

Thus, for example, Mr. Horton (p. 15) declares that Luvale has four semantic tones: the reviewer believes, however, that the generally accepted view of two significant tones is sufficient to explain the tonal structures of Luvale. In dealing with the noun classes, words such as *tata*, *iso*, *yaya*, are included under class 5 (animate sub-class), but such nouns seem never to have had a nasal initial consonant such as can be demonstrated in the nouns which belong truly to class 5, and which have often lost their initial nasal. The reviewer believes that nouns such as *tata* are, in fact, referable to class 1 (*a*) which is not discussed by Mr. Horton. Comparative study of Luchazi, Mbunda, and Lunda would have been valuable to Mr. Horton in this connexion. Nouns of this class, with a homorganic initial nasal, behave in three different ways in these languages:

1. retain the nasal and next consonant as *mpembe* in Luchazi;
2. drop the nasal as *pembe* in Luvale;
3. retain the nasal and drop the next consonant as *membe* in Mbunda.

Mr. Horton's lack of comparative study of other contiguous languages results in occasional statements which could have been better and more explicitly stated if he had had the fruits of comparative study at his disposal, e.g. at par. 245 where he refers to 'the close association of h and p in Luvale'.

The form *mungulinga*, cited as alternative to *nangulinga* for the first person singular of the future tense (p. 121), must, I think, be regarded as purely due to Chokwe influence, and does not occur farther south in Luvale speaking areas. Under par. 415 (Special language) no reference is made to the special vocabulary used in the male puberty rites and *mungongi* rites, a surprising omission. One might continue to detail similar small points where there is room for argument, but these do not detract from the essential value of this book which must be welcomed by all students of Luvale.

C. M. N. WHITE



*Consuetudini giuridiche del Seraé: Raccolte dall'Assemblea dei suoi notabili ad iniziativa del Commissariato Regionale di Addi Ugri.* Parte I. Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, diretta da C. Conti Rossini. Supplemento al Volume VII (1948). Tipographia Pio X: Roma, 1948. Pp. viii+128. L.500.

ANNOUNCED as a pioneer effort in the codification of customary law in Ethiopia (region of Addi Ugri), this work is possibly more significant as a linguistic than as an anthropological document, presenting the texts formulated by the local council of elders, with an Italian translation. Although annotated, the several sections (*Delle persone, della famiglia, and Diritti reali e obbligazioni*) do not give, understandably, a very clear picture of the actual state of the society in which the 'laws' here set down are alleged to operate.

H. D. GUNN

'*Lalela Zulu*'. 100 Zulu lyrics. By HUGH TRACEY, with illustrations by Eric Byrd; Foreword by A. W. Hoernlé. Johannesburg: African Music Society. 1948. Pp. 121. 12s. 6d.

THIS is the first publication of the African Music Society of which Hugh Tracey is founder and director. One hundred Zulu lyrics are printed in the original with an English translation: it might have been better to put the two versions side by side for more easy reference. There is no musical score but an index is provided of gramophone records which have been broadcast from Durban during the last five years. Eric Byrd has enriched the collection with many relevant and witty cartoons. The lyrics are mostly very short, many of two lines only, and readers are to imagine them sung with endless variations and repetitions and accompanied for the most part with dancing. Mr. Tracey's notes elucidate allusions which otherwise would make some lyrics incomprehensible. As Mrs. Hoernlé says in her Foreword, there is here interest for all, while for the anthropologist lyrics 'form most valuable social documents'. They reflect many aspects of Zulu life, both the old and the new. Here is a hunting-song that has been sung by successive generations; here are modern faction fighting-songs; here is a song which has for theme the sinking of the troopship *Mendi* in 1917. Here also are very modern pieces sung by concert parties. Everyday occurrences are reflected in songs relating to 'uPick Up'—the Police Van which patrols the native quarters of towns on the lookout for unfortunate Africans who have no 'pass'. European words and phrases, sometimes obvious, sometimes strangely transmogrified, are used; not only 'iSpecial Pass', but also *ikhaphathi*, 'cup of tea'. One category of lyrics is entitled 'Old men, young men, women and children'; these are not public performances but sung at home in the quietude of evening. No. 25 is a moving example, said to have been sung by older men and women even before the days of Shaka:

The body perishes, the heart stays young.  
The platter wears away with serving food.  
No log retains its bark when old,  
No lover peaceful while the rival weeps.

Several of the pieces are hymns of the Church of Nazareth, one of the separatist denominations. They are, as Mr. Tracey points out, 'more Zulu in effect than any achieved by the European-guided missions'; they demonstrate 'in no uncertain manner how the Zulu can use his own dancing, poetry and music to a Christian end. Not only are the hymns well sung but the choirs appear to retain the Zulu harmonic structure as well as their own melodies'. Mr. Tracey has some trenchant remarks about 'the Euro-African compositions which notoriously distort the language both in tone and stress even to the point of extinguishing the sense of the text when it is sung'.

EDWIN W. SMITH

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Prepared in co-operation with Mr. H. G. A. Hughes, the International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa, School of Oriental and Africa Studies, London; and Mr. Kenneth Kirkwood of Natal University College, South Africa.

Entries in this number cover approximately publications received from July to October 1949. A note on abbreviations of the titles of journals will be found at the end of the bibliography.

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IBLA	Institut des Belles Lettres Arabes [Tunis].
Tanganyika Notes.	Tanganyika Notes and Records.
Human Problems Brit. central Afr.	Human problems in British central Africa: Journal of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute [Livingstone].
	Other titles are abbreviated in accordance with the International Code.









